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Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU)

The Politics of Differentiated Integration: What do
Governments Want? Country Report – Bulgaria

Elitsa Markova

European University Institute

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The Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, created in 1992 and currently directed by Professor Brigid Laffan, aims to develop inter-disciplinary and comparative research on the major issues facing the process of European integration, European societies and Europe's place in 21st century global politics.

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Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU) is a Horizon 2020 funded research project aimed at contributing concretely to the current debate on the 'Future of Europe' by assessing, developing and testing a range of models and scenarios for different levels of integration among EU member states. InDivEU begins from the assumption that managing heterogeneity and deep diversity is a continuous and growing challenge in the evolution of the EU and the dynamic of European integration. The objective of InDivEU is to maximize the knowledge of Differentiated Integration (DI) on the basis of a theoretically robust conceptual foundations accompanied by an innovative and integrated analytical framework, and to provide Europe's policy makers with a knowledge hub on DI. InDivEU combines rigorous academic research with the capacity to translate research findings into policy design and advice.

InDivEU comprises a consortium of 14 partner institutions coordinated by the Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute. The scientific coordinators are Brigid Laffan (Robert Schuman Centre) and Frank Schimmelfennig (ETH Zürich). For more information, visit <http://indiveu.eui.eu/>

Integrating Diversity in the European Union

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Abstract

The report analyses the salience of differentiated integration in the programmes of Bulgarian governments, speeches by heads of governments and heads of state and parliamentary debates between 2007 and 2020 using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Saliency analyses produce two key findings. First, the salience of DI models and mechanisms is generally low in official government positions and parliamentary debates. Second, in the case of Bulgaria, the salience of Schengen and EMU is an expression of a preference for more integration, given that fully-fledged participation in these areas has been consistently considered not only an obligation deriving from EU Membership but also a priority by Bulgarian decision-makers ever since 2007. The report shows that European policy and debates on Europe's future are not central in Bulgarian government positions. Governing parties and opposition parties share a clearly negative stance towards models of DI. In the rhetoric of national politicians, 'core Europe' is used in parallel with 'periphery,' triggering negative associations with second-class membership in a union of more developed and powerful countries. While the position on DI seems to be independent of context, the position towards deepening European integration seems to be more complex and context-driven

Keywords

Bulgaria, EU, differentiated integration, future of Europe, government position.

Summary of Results

I. Saliency

Saliency analyses (encompassing the period from Bulgaria's accession to the European Union (EU) in 2007 until 2020) produce two key findings. First, the saliency of DI models and mechanisms is generally low in official government positions and parliamentary debates. Second, most references to DI instances were made with respect to Schengen and to Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). In the case of Bulgaria, the saliency of Schengen and EMU is an expression of a preference for more integration rather than for any opt-outs, given that fully-fledged participation in these areas has been consistently considered not only an obligation deriving from EU Membership but also a priority by Bulgarian decision-makers ever since 2007, when the country became a member of the European Union.

In Bulgaria, references to DI models are found mainly in parliamentary debates, while DI instances such as with respect to entering the Schengen agreement and membership of the EMU, CFSDP and ESDP are highly salient both in the national parliament and in government programmes and speeches.

II. Position

European policy and debates on Europe's future are not central in Bulgarian government positions. The national Parliament has a rather nominal role in producing inputs and in discussing and confirming national visions and European Council positions, and is often bypassed by the executive. After 13 years of EU membership, Bulgaria remains the poorest Member State and its fully-fledged integration in key European integration processes, such as Economic and Monetary Union and the Schengen area, is incomplete. Bulgaria has not managed to reach the average levels of development of the old Member States in terms of its economy, quality of life, democracy and governance. In such a context, differentiated integration models such as two-speed/multiple-speed Europe are perceived by Bulgarian politicians as threats to equal participation or fertile grounds for growing discrepancies. In the rhetoric of national politicians, 'core Europe' is used in parallel with 'periphery,' triggering negative associations with second-class membership in a union of more developed and powerful countries.

At a conceptual level and in view of pursuing national interests, Bulgarian governments prefer more integration and a stronger European Union. While the question of 'how much Europe' receives a clear answer, the question of 'what Europe' is more complex and context-driven. Bulgaria is strictly against differentiated integration at a conceptual level, while it favours European solidarity (e.g. more European funds to support public finance and cohesion), a stronger European Union (e.g. CFSDP and enlargement with the western Balkan countries, given Bulgaria's geographical position) and further consolidation and joint action (e.g. European energy union) in view of its national interests. On the other hand, fierce discussion around the EU 'Mobility Package' indicated that economic interests can prevail over arguments in support of social fairness. The migration and the coronavirus crises have also highlighted how difficult it is to put into practice the notion of European solidarity.

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List of abbreviations

BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEAOEF	Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds at the National Assembly
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COE	Council for European Affairs
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CVM	Cooperation and Verification Mechanism
DI	Differentiated integration
DSB	Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria
EEA	European Economic Area
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office
ERM-II	Exchange Rate Mechanism II
ESDP	European Security and Defence policy
EU	European Union
FOE	Future of Europe
GERB	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria party
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MP	Member of Parliament
MRF	Movement for Rights and Freedoms
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defence
PM	Prime Minister
UDF	United Democratic Forces

1. Introduction*

Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, together with Romania. Bulgaria's membership was subjected to safeguard clauses in the areas of organised crime, corruption and judicial reform through the EU's Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification. As of 2020 Bulgaria has not been able to join the Schengen area due to it being blocked by certain Member States, particularly the Netherlands, over rule of law concerns. In mid-2020 it joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism II (ERM-II) but it has not accepted the euro yet. Bulgaria has joined new integration processes, such as the European Prosecutor and Permanent structured cooperation in defence (PESCO).

The present report analyses the salience of differentiated integration in the programmes of Bulgarian governments, speeches by heads of governments and heads of state and parliamentary debates between 2007 and 2020 (Appendix 1) using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The salience of DI in these documents was assessed by counting the prevalence of DI-related key words. The assumption is that the more a government talks about DI, the more relevant it is. While key word counts in government programmes and PM speeches show the salience of DI at specific moments in time, an analysis of parliamentary debates allows us to identify trends over time and situational peaks.

The list of key words (Appendix 2) reflects three levels of abstraction. **First**, two different models of DI are distinguished at the conceptual level. On the one hand, the 'multi-speed EU' model depicts DI as a temporary phenomenon and implies that all Member States (MSs) will ultimately reach the same level of integration. On the other hand, the 'multi-end EU' model depicts DI as a potentially permanent feature of European integration. In this model, the MSs do not necessarily strive to reach similar levels of integration. Instead, each MS can 'pick and choose' to adjust its own level of integration to national preferences and capacities. **Second**, the analysis focuses on mechanisms of DI. On the one hand, the enhanced cooperation mechanism allows a limited group of MSs – under certain conditions – to pursue deeper integration without having to involve all MSs. On the other hand, the opt-out mechanism allows MSs to refrain from participating in common policies. In short, enhanced cooperation allows a MS to integrate more than other MSs, while an opt-out allows a Member State to integrate less than other MSs. **Finally**, the analysis looks at various instances of differentiated policies and policy fields. A total of twenty-one instances are included in the analysis. They are grouped in four different categories: (a) instances of enhanced cooperation, (b) instances of opt-out policy fields, (c) instances of inter se agreements and (d) instances of external agreements. Inter se agreements are agreements which EU Member States conclude outside the framework of the European Union. External agreements pertain to agreements between the EU and non-EU states.

The report consists of two sections. The first section contains a quantitative analysis of the salience of DI-related key words. The second section consists in a quantitative and qualitative analysis of positions of Bulgarian governments on DI. It is important to note that, unlike in the old MSs, in the Bulgarian case the salience of Schengen and eurozone DI instances reflects a strong preference for more integration. This is due to the fact that fully-fledged participation in these areas has been consistently considered not only an obligation deriving from EU Membership but also a priority by Bulgarian decision-makers ever since 2007, when the country became a member of the European Union. Accession to the eurozone is generally perceived as an objective process, with Bulgarian governments and all the important political parties supporting it, although with different views about the speed and sequencing of the necessary economic measures. This, however, is not the case with Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen area, which despite the country's technical readiness has not gained political approval in the European Council.

* I wish to thank Mrs. Claudia Badulescu, the author of the Romanian report, who has been an important guide for my own work.

2. How salient is DI for Bulgarian governments?

The salience of DI in Bulgarian governments' programmes and positions has been analysed using computer-assisted word counting, manual word counting and close reading of officially published documents.

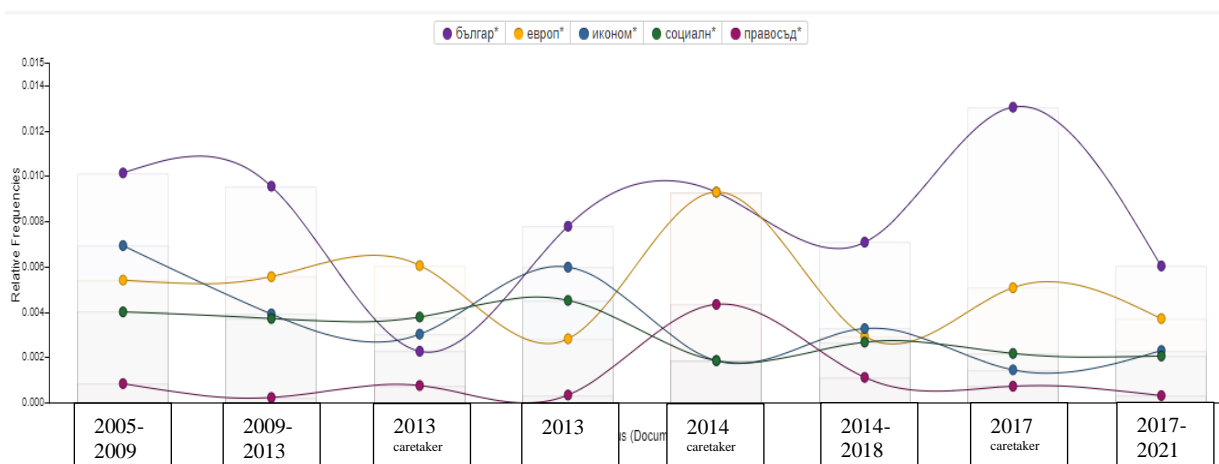
2.1 Salience of DI in government programmes

Bulgarian government programmes issued in 2005-2017 (see Appendix 2) have been searched for references to DI, also with reference to domestic policies by using a combination of computer-assisted word counting and close reading of documents.

The results of the computer-assisted word count show that government programmes did not refer to the key words associated with **DI models** (see Appendix 5). With respect to **DI mechanisms**, no reference was made to the *enhanced cooperation* DI mechanism (with the exception of the expression 'closer cooperation' appearing twice with reference to the Single Supervisory Mechanism in one of the eight government programmes analysed). No specific reference was found for *opt-out*.

To demonstrate the salience of EU-related issues in government programmes, the salience of the terms 'EU,' 'Europe' and 'European' was compared with key terms from the domestic policy field and with the salience of the term 'Bulgarian.' As Figure 1 shows, in total, 'Europ*' is the most salient string after 'Bulgar,*' being in most cases more central to Bulgarian politics than economic, political, social or judicial issues. These trends reflect how, since Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007, Europe has become central to the country's government priorities. The government programme that applied to the preparation and the first years of EU membership (BSP coalition government of Sergey Stanishev 2005-2009) was entitled 'Government Programme for European Integration, Economic Growth and Social Responsibility.' The name of the pro-European centre-right political party GERB, which has ruled the country for most of the time between 2009 and 2020 is the abbreviation in Bulgarian of 'Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria.' Its government programme for the period 2009-2014 (first Borissov government) was entitled 'Programme of the Government for Stable Development of the Republic of Bulgaria.' As Figure 2 shows, Europe is only less salient in the programme of the short-lived BSP coalition government of Plamen Oresharski of 2013.

Figure 1 - Salience of the EU in the context of programmes of regular and caretaker governments



English translation of search items from left to right: Bulgar*; Europ*; econom*; social; judicial

Figure 2 shows that issues that relate to DI instances in the EU, such as the eurozone (n=12), Schengen (n=12), security policy (n=9), defence policy (n=6) and common foreign policy (n=4), are quite salient in the programmes of Bulgarian governments. To compare, common energy policy (n=1) and common transport policy (n=1) have lower salience, while the CAP is very salient (n=16).

Figure 2 - Salience of EU-related issues in government programmes



English translation of search items from left to right: eurozone; Schengen; security policy; defence policy; common foreign policy; common energy policy

For the sake of comparison and considering the importance of EU funds for public finance and economic convergence, we counted the salience of another set of key words. The salience of ‘operational programme’ (n=45), ‘absorption’ (n=43), ‘European Funds’ (n=23), ‘harmonisation of (legislation)’ (n=15), ‘European standards’ (n=8) and ‘European requirements’ (n=7) on the whole is more significant compared to DI instances (Figure 2 above).

2.2 Salience of DI in the context of the presidency of the EU Council

For the first time since it joined the EU in 2007, Bulgaria held the EU Council presidency from January to June 2018. Its presidency was part of a trio presidency composed of Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria. In terms of priorities, the Bulgarian Government declared its ambition to achieve progress in the fields of security, employment, sustainable growth and ensuring a stronger EU presence on the world stage. In particular, it tasked itself with focusing on youth questions and security issues as horizontal priorities. Three broad messages for its programme were announced: consensus, competitiveness and cohesion.

In view of this, this study proceeds with an analysis of Bulgaria’s government programme for the presidency, together with key speeches made by President Rumen Radev and PM Boyko Borissov (available in English). In addition, national parliamentary debates in relation to the adoption of the presidency programme and priorities and the debate in the European parliament where these were discussed were analysed. The computer-assisted analysis indicates that at both the domestic and European levels there was a relatively significant salience of DI-related key words in the government’s official communications relating to DI instances and less salience of DI models and DI mechanisms.

In terms of **DI instances** in the Bulgarian official position and EU presidency programme, the most salient key words were ‘migration’ and also ‘justice’ and ‘rights.’ No reference was found for **DI models**. One reference was found for **DI mechanisms** (enhanced cooperation, regarding taxation). When analysing the salience of DI instances in parliamentary debates in the national and in the European parliaments, reference was found to the terms (in descending order of frequency) ‘rights,’¹ ‘security,’

¹ Used mainly with reference to the European Pillar of Social Rights and fundamental rights.

‘defence,’ ‘Brexit,’ ‘Schengen,’ ‘future of Europe,’ ‘foreign policy’ and ‘eurozone.’ No reference was found for **DI Models or Mechanisms**.

2.3 Salience of DI in government key speeches

The analysis continues with a close reading of investiture speeches given in the Bulgarian Parliament by Prime Ministers and Presidents (8 speeches between 2007 and 2017), together with their speeches relating to the EU or to the future of European integration, but excluding the government’s discourse with respect to Bulgaria’s presidency of the European Council, which was analysed in the previous section.

DI-related **models** and **mechanisms** are not mentioned in the PMs’ and Presidents’ key speeches in parliament (a total of 8 documents were analysed for this search). The analysis found no strict reference to the enhanced cooperation DI mechanism, while ‘enhancing integration’ was used in the political vocabulary of Prime Minister Borissov when discussions on the future of Europe took place in the national assembly.

References to DI models and mechanisms were not found in official first speeches in parliament. At the same time, the key string ‘Europ*’ is the second most salient key string after ‘Bulgaria’. Quite naturally, the most references to Europe were registered in 2007, when Bulgaria entered the EU. The analysis of DI instances in Bulgarian Prime Ministers’ and Presidents’ first speeches indicates a relatively significant salience of key words: ‘rights’ (n=63), ‘foreign policy’ (n=15), ‘Schengen’ (n=4), ‘security and defence’ (n=2), ‘eurozone’ (n=2), ‘area of freedom, security and justice’ (n=1), ‘future of the (European) Union’ (n=1).

2.4 European Council Statements

With regard to this part of the analysis, limitations² in finding the original speeches of Bulgarian Prime Ministers and Presidents on the occasion of EU summits should be set out. Available media reports, which include only a limited and selected range of citations, were not included in the computer-based search analysis.

Pursuant to Art. 105, para. 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and Art. 97 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, Bulgarian Prime Ministers present to the MPs reports³ on the participation by Bulgaria in the decision-making process of the European Union during the rotational presidencies of the EU. After Bulgaria’s accession to the European Union, a special advisory body was formed at the Council of Ministers – the Council for European Affairs⁴ (CEA). This is a body⁵ in which all Bulgarian country positions submitted to the European Council, the Council of the European Union

² Relevant documents for the purposes of the analysis cannot be found on the official website of the government: www.government.bg. URLs published in limited media reports directing to original PM EU Council statements on the government’s official website are invalid as of July-August 2020. “The Bulgarian PM has the habit of abandoning the summit table to speak to his country’s media,” wrote Gergi Gotev on the occasion of Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov taking “the liberty of commenting on Brexit on the sidelines of the EU summit on Thursday (14 December 2017), using language that obviously diverges from the common line adopted by the EU27.” Article published on www.euractiv.com (euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/news/borissov-on-brexit-nothing-is-agreed-until-everything-is-agreed/)

³ Such Reports are not available for download on the site www.parliament.bg. For the present analysis, relevant transcripts from the plenary sittings of the national assembly containing the speeches by the Prime Minister and the subsequent debates were used.

⁴ In Bulgarian: Съвет по европейски въпроси

⁵ As of July-August 2020 the official website of the EU Coordination Mechanism in Bulgaria <http://www.euaffairs.government.bg> cannot be reached.

and its working bodies are coordinated, after which ministers submit them for approval to the Council of Ministers.

The following citation from a parliamentary control session of the national assembly in 2018 with the BSP opposition leader Kornelia Ninova in a declaration addressing the PM as unaccountable before the parliament in presenting the country's EU Councils positions is quite illustrative for this part of the research:

“Dear Mr. Prime Minister Borissov, welcome! **You have not come to the parliament since July 7, 2017 – 11 months, to answer to parliamentary control.** I dare say that there is no such miracle in the world. **For almost a year, the prime minister has not appeared before parliament to report on the government's work.** I recently met with party leaders from the Visegrad Four and I assure you, Mr Borissov, it is a brilliant example of a functioning parliamentary democracy. **Even these strong leaders, before every meeting of the European institutions, appear before their parliaments, receive support and go to the (European Council) meetings with confidence that their parliaments are behind them.** In our country we have never heard in the National Assembly on any of the important topics, for example, the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. **We did not discuss them, we did not support you** in order to give you this self-confidence, which you really need in order to appear with the power of the whole people's representation. [...]”⁶
BSP Chairperson Kornelia Ninova, national Parliament, 08.06.2018

The analysis here includes reports by Bulgarian Prime Ministers referring to Bulgaria's country positions and priorities on the occasion of the following European Council rotating presidencies: Slovenia and France in 2008; Spain and Belgium in 2010; Hungary and Poland in 2011; Denmark and Cyprus in 2012; Ireland and Lithuania in 2013, Greece in 2014 and Bulgaria⁷ and Austria in 2018. The saliences of DI in the following debates in the national parliament were analysed separately.

Analysis of Prime Ministers' reports before and after European Council meetings between 2008 and 2020 reveals no salience of key words related to **DI models and mechanisms** (Appendix 7). There is a significant salience **of DI instances** referring to Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen Agreement (n=8) and the eurozone (n=8) and Economic and Monetary Union (n=2). Notably, ‘cohesion’ is very salient in reports on Bulgaria's EU Council priorities (n=17). This can be explained by the fact that in Bulgaria, being the poorest county in the EU,⁸ public investment crucially depends on EU funding. Macroeconomic analysis shows that EU funds have had a sizeable effect on Bulgarian growth and there have been other beneficial macroeconomic effects including on consumption, inflation, trade, wages,

⁶ Original text in Bulgarian: “Уважаеми господин премиер Борисов, добре дошли! Не сте идвали в парламента от 7 юли 2017 г. – 11 месеца, да отговоряте в парламентарен контрол. Смяя да твърдя, че такова чудо няма по света. Почти година премиерът не е стъпвал пред парламента, за да отчете работата на правителството. Скоро се срещнах с лидери на партия от Вишеградската четворка и Ви уверявам, господин Борисов – брилянтен пример за работеща парламентарна демокрация. Дори тези силни лидери, преди всяко заседание на европейски институции се явяват пред парламентите си, получават подкрепа и отиват със самочувствие на срещите, че зад тях стоят парламентите им. У нас нито веднъж не чуваме – в Народното събрание, по нито една от важните теми – например по Председателството на България на Съвета на Европейския съюз. Не ги обсъдихме, не Ви подкрепихме, за да Ви дадем това самочувствие, от което наистина имате нужда, за да се явите със силата на цялото народно представителство. [...]”

⁷ DI salience in speeches/priorities during the Bulgarian presidency in the first half of 2018 were discussed separately in a previous section of the current report.

⁸ According to Eurostat's definition of at-risk-of-poverty, 23.4% of the Bulgarian population (1,665 thousand persons) lived below the poverty line in 2017 (i.e. below 60% of the median income). This was among the highest rates of relative poverty in the European Union. The at-risk-of-poverty rate for the whole EU-28 in 2017 was 16.9%. According to Eurostat, in 2017 38.9% of the Bulgarian population lived at risk of poverty or social exclusion (‘People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion - Statistics Explained’ 2019).

employment and investment.⁹ Brexit was not mentioned in any of the documents that were analysed in this search.

We also analysed DI salience in the parliamentary debates following PMs' statements on European Council meetings. Unlike in Prime Ministers' reports, here the search indicates a scarce presence of **DI models** (two-speed Europe (n=2) and multi-speed Europe (n=1)) **and mechanisms**. The transcript of the plenary sitting of the national assembly on the occasion of the ratification of the Lisbon treaty in 2008 was included in the computer-based search and analysis and this is where 'enhanced cooperation' was mentioned once. As for **DI instances**, these are quite salient and, similarly to PMs' European Council-related reports, most of all include Schengen and the eurozone, which is explainable in view of Bulgaria's long-lasting ambition to fully integrate in the Schengen area and enter the EMU. Other key words found (with low salience) include 'fundamental rights,' 'defence,' 'justice,' 'European patent,' 'common foreign policy' and 'European Prosecutor's Office.' Brexit was mentioned only once in 2018 in the course of discussions over the multiannual financial framework and cohesion policy. The insignificant salience of Brexit is surprising considering that disintegration processes in the EU pose a significant risk for Bulgaria and can cause uncertainty and a sense of losing direction in Bulgarian society. In particular, Brexit poses serious direct challenges as many Bulgarians study and work in the UK, but a Brexit-induced economic shock in the largest EU economies is an even bigger threat.

2.5 Salience of DI in national parliament debates

The report continues with a review of Bulgarian parliamentary debates in 2007-2020 using computer-assisted methods and manual counting of key words in repositories of parliamentary debates.¹⁰ The results indicate that the salience of **DI models** was higher in parliamentary debates than in government speeches or programmes. For the years 2007-2020, a total of 105 references to DI models were found, most of them including the key words 'two-speed Europe' and 'multi-speed Europe.' No references were found for 'coalition of the willing,' 'variable geometry' or 'two-tier Europe.'

As Figure 3 shows, the most salient **DI model** was 'two-speed Europe' (n=56, with peaks in 2011 and 2017), which was followed by 'multi-speed Europe' (n=28), 'core Europe'¹¹ (n=17), 'concentric circles' (n=2) and 'à la carte' (n=1). The share of 'multiple speed' DI models accounts for around 80% of all references made to DI models in parliamentary debates. As we can see, the peaks of DI-related debates were in 2011 and 2017, with gradual decreases in 2012 and 2018. In the peak year of 2017, the most common key words were 'two-speed Europe' (35%), 'multi-speed Europe' (33%), 'core Europe' (27%) and 'concentric circles' (5%). As before, the multi-speed model is more prevalent than the multiple ends model.

⁹ EU Funds in Bulgaria. Assessment of the Macroeconomic Effects of the Implementation of Programmes Co-Funded by EU Funds. Sofia: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria.

¹⁰ The search encompassed transcripts of parliamentary sessions, and of discussions in relevant parliamentary committees, such as the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of European Funds, and committees on foreign policy, defence, labour and social policy, the budget and finance.

¹¹ A closer look at references to the term 'core Europe' shows that it was mentioned in debates with reference to Bulgaria being perceived as on the 'periphery' of Europe and a catching-up EU member state.

Figure 3 - DI Salience in Parliamentary Debates – Conceptual Level

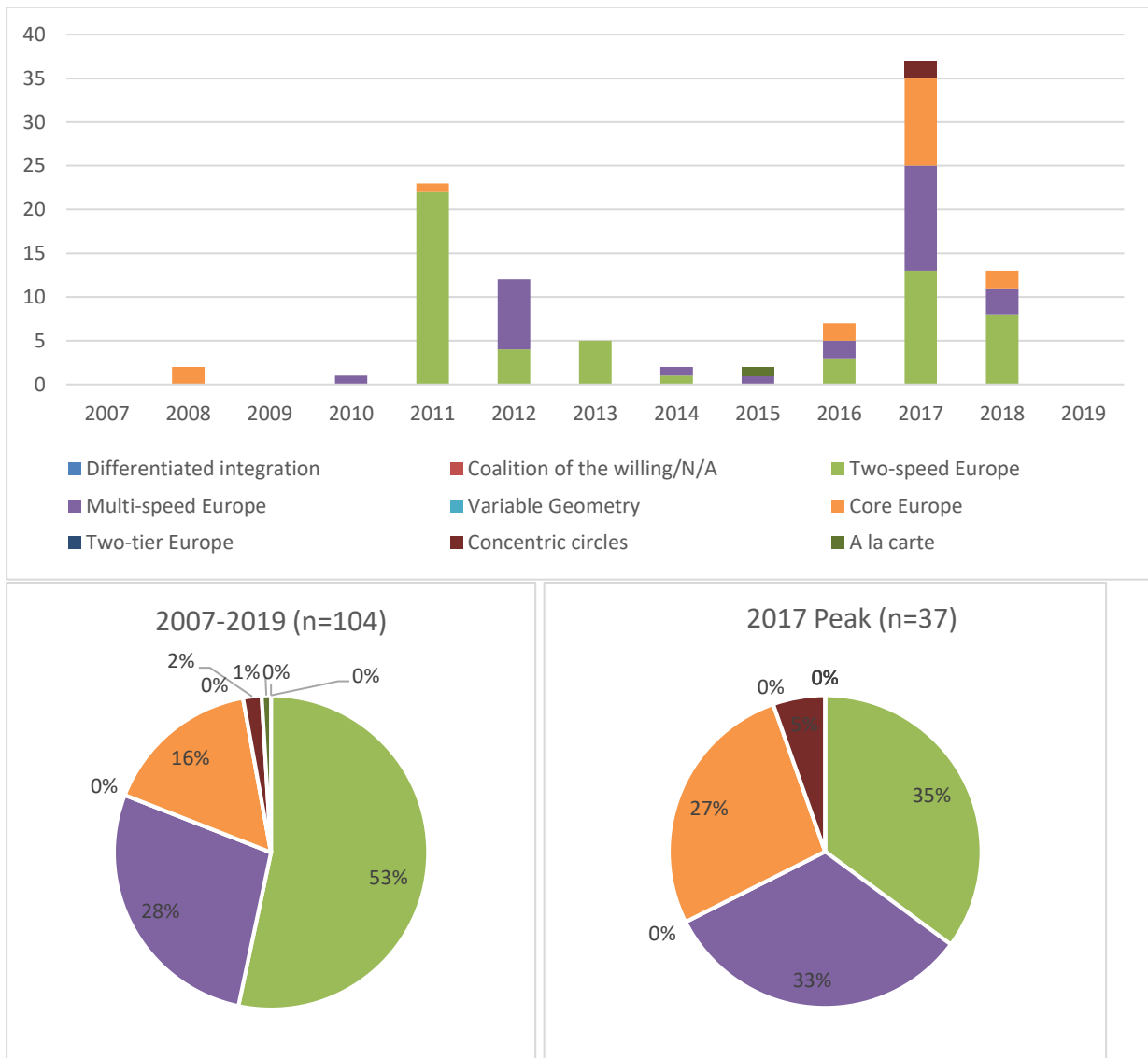
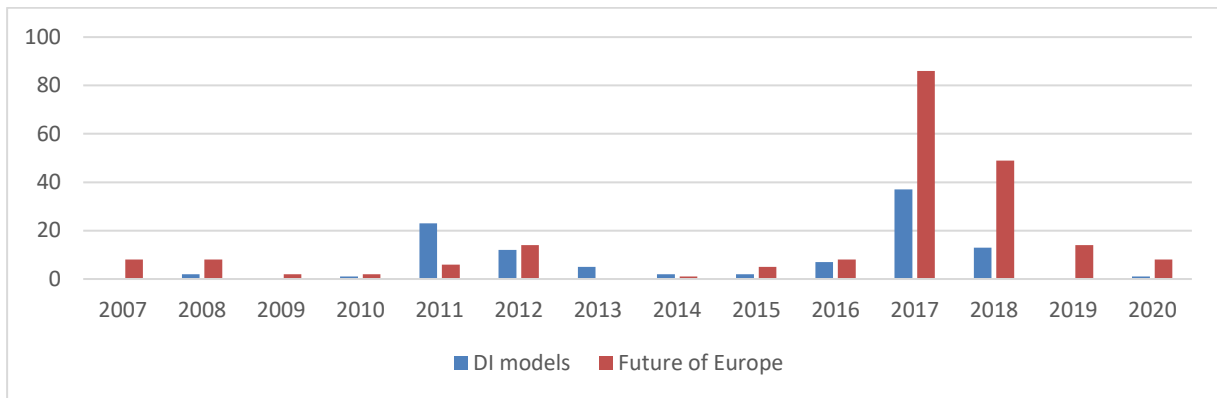


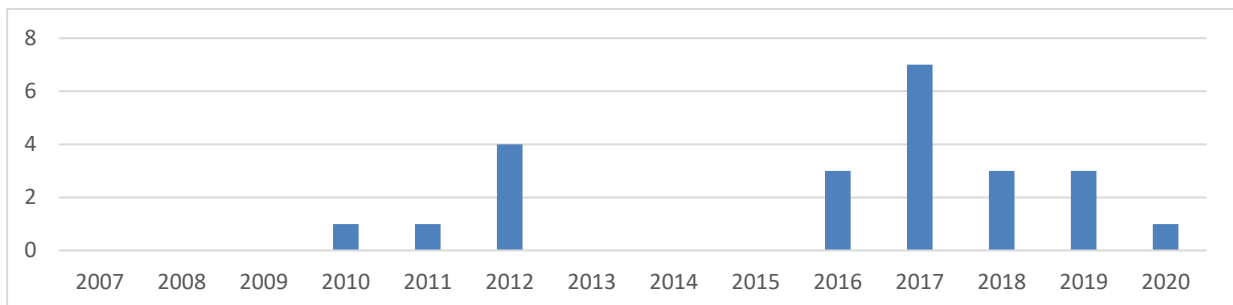
Figure 4 below indicates that the ‘future of Europe’ has been present in Bulgarian parliamentary debates since EU accession in 2007 and it notably increased in salience in 2017-2018 when the White Paper on the Future of Europe was discussed in the national parliament. Hence, it is likely that the peak in references to DI key words in 2017 is related to this debate.

Figure 4 - Salience of DI conceptual key words relative to the FOE debate



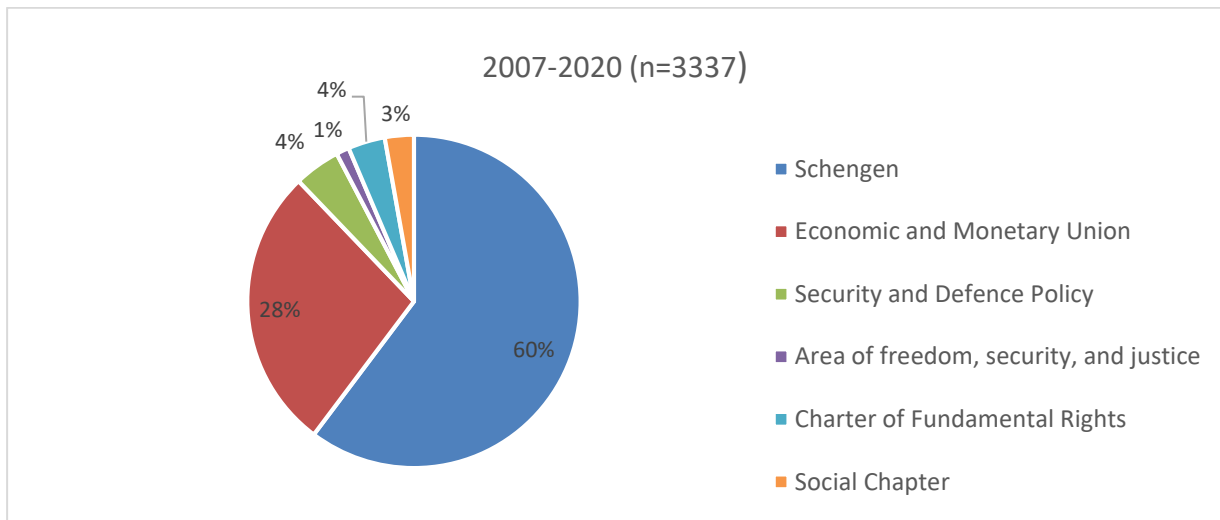
Moving next to the salience of **DI mechanisms**, a manual search through transcripts indicated that between 2010 and 2020 ‘enhanced cooperation’ was present in parliamentary debates (n=23), while no reference was found to ‘opt-out.’ **Enhanced cooperation** (Figure 5) was mentioned in 2010 (n=1) and 2011 (n=1) referring generally to the Lisbon Treaty. In 2012, enhanced cooperation was mentioned in a discussion on the ‘Financial Transaction Tax’ (n=1) and the Lisbon Treaty mechanisms for economic and fiscal cooperation (n=3). In 2016, enhanced cooperation was mentioned in debates in relation to the ‘European Public Prosecutor’ (n=1) and the ‘European Patent’ (n=4). In 2017, references were found in connection with ‘Economic and Monetary Union’ (n=1), the ‘European Public Prosecutor’ (n=3) and Europol (n=1), in 2018 regarding the ‘European Public Prosecutor’ (n=3)’ and ‘PESCO’ (n=1), in 2019 regarding the ‘European Public Prosecutor’ (n=3) and in 2020 referring to the ‘European Patent’ (n=1).

Figure 5 - Salience of the ‘enhanced cooperation’ DI mechanism (2007-2020)



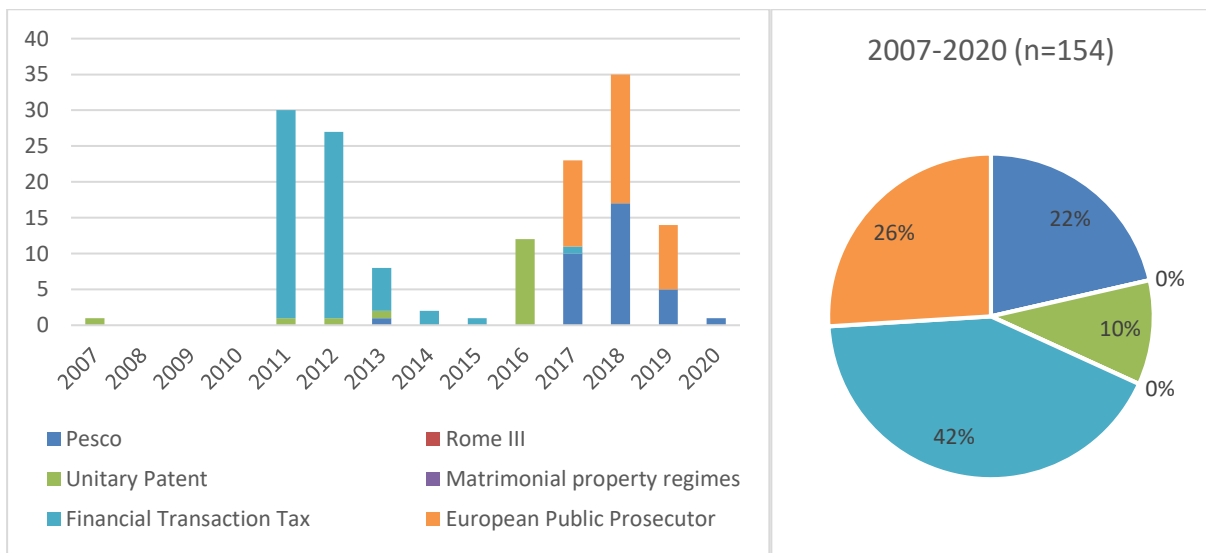
Next, the analysis moves from DI mechanisms to instances of differentiated policies. The search indicated that key words referring to DI Instances in Bulgarian parliamentary debates are more salient compared to DI mechanisms. Figure 6 shows the salience of policy fields in which opt-outs by some Member States exist. As we will see in the second part of this report, while in theory opt-out instances of internal DI indicate a preference for less integration, in Bulgaria’s case the preference is for more integration through involvement in DI instances such as Schengen (n=2011), EMU (n=820), Security and Defence Policy (n=150), the Charter of Fundamental Rights (n=120), the European Social Charter (n=94) and the area of freedom, security and justice (n=42). The high salience of Schengen found in parliamentary debates is in line with the results found in the previous analyses, with it being the most salient DI instance across all the documents analysed for this report.

Figure 6 - Salience of opt-out policy fields in parliamentary debates



Next, analysing the salience of six instances of enhanced cooperation (Figure 7), we found that most instances involve the Financial Transaction Tax (n=65, with peaks in 2011 and 2012, when Bulgaria supported its introduction after changing its initially negative stance), the European Public Prosecutor (n=40, with a peak in 2018, explained by the fact that preparing the EPPO to become operational by 2020 was a top political priority during the Bulgarian Council presidency), PESCO (n=33, with a peak in 2018 after Bulgaria’s decision to join) and the Unitary Patent (n=16, with a peak in 2016). There is no salience of ‘Rome III’ or ‘Matrimonial property regimes’. Overall, there are peaks in salience in 2011-2012 and 2016-2019 with a maximum in 2018. No mention was discovered for the period 2008-2010.

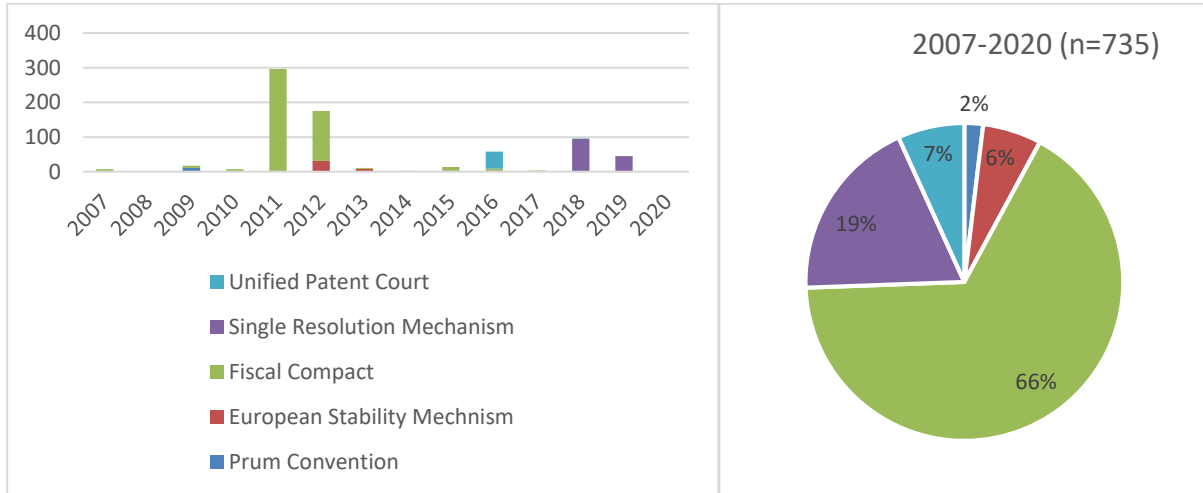
Figure 7 - Salience of instances of enhanced cooperation in parliamentary debates



Subsequently, we analysed the salience of five inter se agreements (Figure 8). We found a significant salience of ‘Fiscal compact’ (n=489 with a peak in 2012 when the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the EMU was signed by the EU Member States, with the exceptions of the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom – although the Treaty was not binding for states that were not members of the eurozone, Bulgaria, like Romania, chose to opt in and to ratify the Fiscal Compact

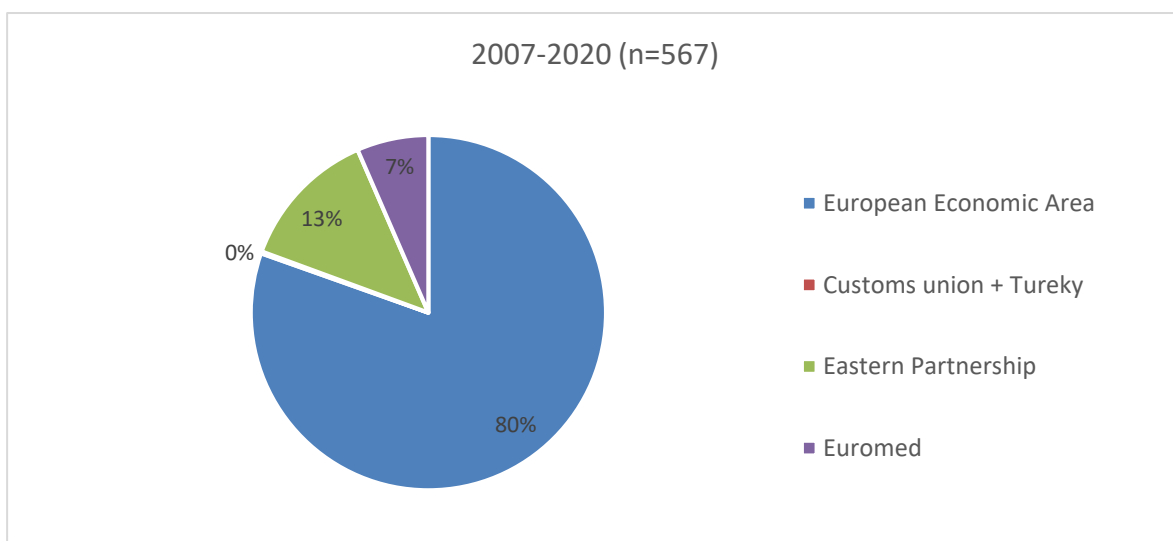
nonetheless) and of the ‘Single Resolution Mechanism’ (n=138 with a peak in 2018). The ‘Unified Patent Court’ was also very salient (n=50 with a peak in 2016 when Bulgaria entered the agreement). The ‘Prüm Convention’ (n=14) was relatively salient in 2009 after Bulgaria ratified the agreement.

Figure 8 - Salience of inter se agreements



Finally, we analysed the salience of four instances of external association agreements. The search found that there is a predominant salience of the ‘European Economic Area’ (EEA) with 80% of all instances (n=456), while the ‘Eastern Partnership’ (n=73) and ‘Euromed’ also appear (n=37). There is almost no evidence of salience of the Turkey/Customs Union, as is reflected in Figure 9 below. The significant salience of the EEA can be easily explained by the fact that after its accession to the EU, Bulgaria became a beneficiary state under the EEA and the Norway Financial Mechanism and it receives funds according to the relevant memoranda of understanding with the donor states, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, in each programme period. Strengthening Bulgaria’s leading role in the region, including active participation in the Eastern Partnership policy, was a declared goal of the Bulgarian government.

Figure 9 - Salience of external agreements in parliamentary debates



3. What positions do Bulgarian governments have on DI?

3.1 A short overview of the political system and governments in the period 2007-2020

The current Constitution of Bulgaria was adopted in 1991 and established a unicameral parliamentary system. The Prime Minister and the cabinet remain the focal points of the executive, while the President has a ceremonial and symbolic role, with a limited say in domestic affairs, except for setting up caretaker governments when needed. This has happened three times in the period under review (in 2013, 2014 and 2017). At the time of its accession to the EU in 2007, Bulgaria was governed by a tripartite coalition formed with BSP's Sergei Stanishev as Prime Minister in partnership with the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) and the National Movement Simeon II.

The Stanishev government managed Bulgaria's EU accession and initially enjoyed high rates of economic growth and improved economic performance. However, at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, Bulgaria's economy and industrial base suffered unexpected losses from the global recession, which was gaining momentum. Since 2009, the political landscape has been dominated by a succession of three centre-right governments led by the political party GERB. Since its creation in 2007, GERB has adopted a populist discourse that initially attacked corrupt elite members with a law and order agenda, but after nearly a decade of rule it has become subject to the same accusations.¹² The commitment of the first Borisov government to fight corruption ~~and organised crime~~ was a particular source of disappointment. In February 2013, this government resigned following months of anti-poverty demonstrations. The next coalition government of Prime Minister Plamen Oresharski led by BSP collapsed in less than 18 months after another round of street protests, but not before the MRF withdrew its support in the national assembly. After a turbulent two-year period with two rounds of early elections, in 2015 Bulgaria got another coalition government led by Prime Minister Boyko Borisov with partners from the left and the right. Bulgaria's pro-European direction has not changed despite the difficult coalition of GERB with the United Patriots (three Eurosceptic far-right nationalist parties). However, grand reform pledges were not fulfilled and the second Borisov government resigned in November 2016 after GERB lost the presidential election to General Rumen Radev – a newcomer to politics supported by the BSP. The resignation of the second GERB cabinet was followed by re-election of the same party and the appointment of the third government of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov in a difficult coalition with far-right nationalist parties (United Patriots). The next section presents the position of successive Bulgarian governments regarding DI, including a holistic grading analysis.

3.2 Quantitative overview of government positions (holistic grading)

In a next step, government positions on DI in the periods 2008, 2012 and 2017-2020 were graded to register:

1. DI salience – from 0 (no reference to DI) to 2 (direct/central reference to DI), and
2. DI position – from 0 (negative) to 2 (positive). A total of 27 documents were graded following this procedure.

A total of 27 documents were analysed in the following categories: government programmes (3 documents), first speeches (3 documents), Bulgarian European Council presidency position and debates (10) and Future of Europe positions and debates (11 documents).

¹² Since the beginning of 2020, Bulgaria has been shaken by a series of scandals that have exposed the country's rampant corruption and fragile rule of law.

Figure 10 - Holistic grading of salience and government position in key documents

Year	DI Salience score	DI Position
2008	0	-
2012	0.25	1
2017 - 2020	1.04	0.84

The numbers in the table above indicate no salience of government DI positions in 2008, insignificant salience in 2012 and an increase in salience between 2017 and 2020. In 2012 the DI position of the government was neutral and also in 2017-2020 it was generally neutral. The DI position of Bulgaria is, however, positive in policy fields such as Schengen and the eurozone. An overview of DI statements in parliamentary debates indicates that the stance of government representatives towards DI models is clearly negative in the centre-periphery discourse with Bulgaria belonging to the periphery but positive when it comes to Bulgaria's prospects for becoming part of the 'core.' The following citations are illustrative in this respect:

"We cannot afford at this stage, and it **would not be fair to divide Europe into different speeds**, in different formats, in terms of solutions that ultimately affect everyone. Of course, there are specific decisions that only affect the euro area, and they can be taken within the framework of decision-making mechanisms in the euro area. There are some concerns for Bulgaria in this debate.

The first of these is real, and that is that if the proposals for a future Economic and Monetary Union lead to the creation of some form of mini-European Union within the Union of 27, two economic areas with two different economic policies will be differentiated. After all, it is not in the interests of either our country or Europe as a whole."¹³ Foreign Minister Nikolay Mladenov, Parliamentary debate, 10.10.2012.

"I am convinced that **the place of our country is in the core, not in the periphery of the European Union**. Of particular importance for us is our inclusion in the Schengen area and in the eurozone, and Bulgaria successfully meets the criteria set out in the Stability and Growth Pact."¹⁴ Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, Parliamentary debate, 07.07.2017.

"There are five scenarios, but we can comment on them as two – more or less Europe. There is a nuance here that is extremely important! [...] I can accept the approach that someone does not want to be integrated into the economic or political core. [...] If this is based on the will of the individual state, I would accept it. It is not good for Europe, I'm convinced, but I would accept it. **What is definitely not acceptable is for some countries, a core of countries, to decide where someone else's place is.** In this sense, **if Bulgaria wants to be part of the core, it must become part of the core**, of course, covering all technical criteria."¹⁵ Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Dontchev, Parliamentary debate, 26.07.2017.

¹³ Original text in Bulgarian: "Не можем да си позволим на този етап и не би било коректно да разделяме Европа на различни скорости, на различни формати по отношение на решения, които в крайна сметка засягат всички. Разбира се, има конкретни решения, които засягат само Евророната, и те могат да бъдат взети в рамките на механизмите за вземане на решения в Евророната. Пред България съществува това, че има някои притеснения в този дебат. Първото от тях е реално и това е, че ако предложенията за бъдещия Икономически и паричен съюз доведат до създаването на някаква форма на миниевропейски съюз в рамките на Съюза от 27, по този начин ще се обособят две икономически области с две различни икономически политики и това в крайна сметка не е в интерес нито на нашата страна, нито на Европа като цяло."

¹⁴ Original text in Bulgarian: "Убеден съм, че мястото на страната ни е в ядрото, а не в периферията на Европейския съюз. От особено значение за нас е включването ни в Шенгенското пространство и в Евророната, и България успешно покрива критериите, заложи в Пакта за стабилност и растеж."

¹⁵ Original text in Bulgarian: "Сценариите са пет, но ние можем да ги коментираме като два – повече или по-малко Европа. Тук има нюанс, който е изключително важен! [...] Мога да приема подхода някой да не иска да бъде интегриран в икономическото или в политическото ядро. Някой да поиска да стои малко по-вън. [...] Ако това е базирано на волята на отделната държава, аз бих го приел. Не е добре за Европа, категоричен съм, но бих го приел. Това, което категорично не може да се приеме, някои държави, ядро от държави, да решават къде е мястото

The stance of the opposition on DI models is clearly negative and entirely in the context of the ‘core-periphery’ discourse:

“Here (ref. the EU), however, the core of the richer countries in the European Union seeks to secure its selfish interests over the whole community, imposing a **disproportionate distribution of the benefits** and costs of the integration process, especially for the new Member States. [...] At the same time, **the core of the European Union is interested in the enlargement of the Union leading to the creation of a reliable buffer zone** with a view to moving away and overcoming the risk of destabilisation and conflict situations at the external borders with third countries.”¹⁶ Stanislav Stanilov, Coalition Attack, Parliamentary debate, 21.03.2008.

“**This stratification of one, two, three speeds must now be stopped** and Bulgaria's position must be in the direction of these meetings, which are made only for the eurozone – yes, really, at least the others should be observers, at least we should be heard. And our opinion, at least we have to participate, we have to be there.”¹⁷ Martin Dimitrov, Blue Coalition, Parliamentary debate, 27.01.2012.

“There is a very dangerous tendency inherent in the approach that has been imposed in the formation of this intergovernmental treaty (The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union) – bypassing the Community method, ignoring the European Parliament, the European Commission to a lesser extent, but also. **And this sets a serious time bomb to turn Europe more and more into a Europe of several groups on different issues, at two, at three speeds.** And this is a huge risk.”¹⁸ Sergei Stanishev, BSP, Parliamentary debate, 27.01.2012.

“In general, when we talk about the future of the European Union and how it will look, how it will be structured, how the integration process will go, I think that here **we also share one goal – no European Union at different speeds.** The integration process is open for all, of course, today there may be integration circles in which you can say not to participate, but they should be open to all, not the other way around – to create closed circles in which Member States must apply, to meet the criteria to be eligible.” Kristian Vigenin, BSP, Parliamentary debate, 19.10.2017.

“I can give you more examples, not only in transport. This is the case in the financial sector, this is the case with banks. There is also a policy through regulators towards local banks in favour of large banks in European countries. This is also the case in the non-banking financial sector. This is the case, as I said, in retail chains. Just because we say these things does not mean that we are not pro-European. Let us dispel this delusion and the attempts at criticism that will come from certain circles in Bulgaria or from certain political forces outside the parliament. To be a European, to be a pro-European is exactly what this means – to fight the things that give rise to the centrifugal forces in the European Union, which divide the European Union into zones, speeds, big, big, small and so on. That is why we from the MRF, being a pro-European party, will fight against these things in the

на някоя друга. В този смисъл, ако България иска да е част от ядрото, тя трябва да стане част от ядрото, разбира се, покривайки всички технически критерии.”

¹⁶ Original text in Bulgarian: “Тук (развитието на ЕС) обаче проличава стремежът на ядрото в Европейския съюз от по-богати държави да осигури себичните си интереси над цялата общност, налагайки особено на новоприетите страни непропорционално разпределение на изгодите и разходите в процеса на интеграция. [...] При това ядрото в Европейския съюз е заинтересувано разширяването на Съюза да доведе до създаването на надеждна буферна зона с оглед отдалечаване и преодоляване опасността от дестабилизация и конфликтни ситуации по външните граници с трети страни.”

¹⁷ Original text in Bulgarian: “Това разслояване на една, на две, на три скорости сега трябва да бъде спряно и позицията на България трябва да бъде в посока тези срещи, които се правят само за Евроразоната – да, наистина поне другите трябва да бъдем наблюдатели, поне трябва да се чува и нашето мнение, поне трябва да участваме, трябва да бъдем там.”

¹⁸ Original text in Bulgarian: “Има много опасна тенденция, заложен в подхода, който е наложен при формирането на този междуправителствен договор – заобикалянето на общностния метод, игнорирането на Европейския парламент, на Европейската комисия в по-малка степен, но също така. И това залага една сериозна бомба със закъснител за превръщане на Европа все повече в Европа на няколко групи по различни въпроси, на две, на три скорости. И това е огромен риск.”

European Union, to protect business, for all countries to have equal rights, and not just on paper.”¹⁹
Yordan Tsonev, MRF, Parliamentary debate, 11.05.2018.

References to the enhanced cooperation DI mechanism in government statements are either neutral (in presenting the Lisbon Treaty) or positive (more specifically, with reference to the European Prosecutor’s Office).

“I would like to point out here that we are talking about two groups of countries. We are participating in the group of initiators of the so-called ‘enhanced presence,’ ‘enhanced cooperation,’ and the rest of the group, which is happily becoming less and less, and I hope that by October, when the regulation is approved by the European Parliament, all will have joined the enhanced cooperation.”²⁰
Tsetska Tsacheva, Minister of Legal Affairs, Parliamentary debate, 16.06.2017.

“In summary - what could be said is that especially for Bulgaria the data show that our population is increasingly excited about European integration, including our membership of Schengen and the eurozone. These are issues that dominate the public sphere. Fortunately, we have joined two new forms of enhanced cooperation within the European Union, namely the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office and the ongoing structured cooperation in the field of defence.”²¹
Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of the Bulgarian presidency of the European Council, Parliamentary debate, 20.06.2018.

3.3 Qualitative assessment of government positions

A qualitative analysis of government positions generally confirms the observations in the quantitative analysis in the first part of this report. European policy and debates on Europe’s future are not central in Bulgarian government positions. The national parliament has a somewhat nominal role in producing inputs and in discussing and confirming national visions and European Council positions. The legislature is often bypassed by the executive.

After 13 years of EU membership, Bulgaria remains the poorest Member State. Its fully-fledged integration in key European integration processes, such as Economic and Monetary Union and the Schengen area, is incomplete. According to statistics and expert assessments, like other new Member States, over the years of its membership Bulgaria has not managed to reach the average levels of development of the old Member States in its economy, quality of life, democracy or governance.²² In this context, differentiated integration models, such as two-speed/multiple-speed Europe, are perceived by Bulgarian politicians as a threat to equal participation or as fertile grounds for growing discrepancies. In the language of Bulgarian politics and the rhetoric of national politicians, the notion of ‘core Europe’

¹⁹ Original text in Bulgarian: “Мога да Ви дам още примери, не само в транспорта. Така е във финансовия сектор, така е при банките. Там също има провеждане на политика през регулаторите спрямо местните банки в полза на големите банки от европейските страни. Така е и в небанковия финансов сектор. Така е, както вече казах, в търговските вериги. Това, че ние заявяваме тези неща, не означава, че не сме проевропейци. Нека да разсеем тази заблуда и опитите за критики, които ще дойдат от определени кръгове в България или от определени политически сили извън парламента. Да си европеец, да си проевропеец точно това означава – да се бориш с нещата, които пораждаят центробежните сили в Европейския съюз, които разделят Европейския съюз на зони, скорости, големи, едри, малки и така нататък. Затова ние от ДПС, бъдейки проевропейска партия, ще се борим срещу тези неща в Европейския съюз, да се защитава бизнесът, всички страни да имат равни права, а да не е само на книга.”

²⁰ Original text in Bulgarian: “Тук искам да обърна внимание, че става дума за две групи държави. Ние участваме в групата на инициаторите на така нареченото „засилено присъствие“, „засилено сътрудничество“, и останалата група държави, които за радост стават все по-малко и аз се надявам до октомври, когато ще бъде одобрен регламентът от Европейския парламент, всичките да са се присъединили към засиленото сътрудничество.”

²¹ Original text in Bulgarian: “В обобщение – това, което би могло да се каже е, че специално за България данните ни показват, че нашето население се вълнува все повече от европейската интеграция, включително членството ни в Шенген и в Еврозоната, са въпроси, които доминират в публичното пространство. За щастие се включихме в два нови формата на засилено сътрудничество в рамките на Европейския съюз, а именно създаването на Службата на европейския прокурор и постоянното структурирано сътрудничество в сферата на отбраната.”

²² See the "Catch Up Index" of the Open Society Institute – Sofia, available at <http://thecatchupindex.eu/TheCatchUpIndex/>

is often used in parallel with ‘periphery,’ triggering negative associations with Bulgaria’s role as a ‘second-class’ member of a union of wealthier and more powerful countries. This can explain why, unlike in parliamentary debates, DI models are not salient in government programmes.

In the text of the programme of the third cabinet of Prime Minister Borissov (2017-2021) we found the expression ‘different levels of integration’ used in a negative sense in connection with Brexit, and this is the only exception from what was said above.

“The prospect of EU fragmentation following the UK referendum seems increasingly real. The **existence of different levels of integration of EU Member States is a source of instability**. We are in favour of preserving the unity of the EU and welcome a future deepening of integration between the Member States.”²³ Government Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2017-2021.

Overall, it can be concluded that at a conceptual level Bulgarian governments prefer more integration and a stronger European Union so national interests can be better defended. However, while the question of ‘how much Europe’ receives more or less a short answer, the question of (exactly) ‘what Europe’ is more complex and context-driven. Indicative of this observation is the fierce discussion around the EU ‘Mobility package,’ in which arguments in support of social fairness gave way to fears of economic losses. In this discussion, Bulgaria declared the EU stance disproportionate and discriminatory against peripheral countries. The Bulgarian Prime Minister was quoted as saying that the rules included in the legislation package did not meet the EU’s social agenda,²⁴ had a negative impact on environmental objectives and would unfavourably influence the European economy as a whole. On the other hand, an example of backing joint policies is the Prime Minister’s expressed view of the advantages for Bulgaria deriving from the European Energy Union. Borissov was quoted as saying in his typical inimitable style, “*We are categorically for a European energy union, because fraternal Russia sells to fraternal Bulgaria the most expensive gas in Europe. If there is an energy union, we will have a lower gas price.*”²⁵

DI-related models and mechanisms are not mentioned in the PMs’ and Presidents’ key speeches in parliament (a total of 8 documents were analysed for this search). The analysis found no strict reference to the enhanced cooperation DI model, while ‘enhancing integration’ was used by Prime Minister Borissov when discussions on the future of Europe took place in the national assembly.

“**Enhancing integration is what we are striving for in the development of Europe**. On this basis, we need to deepen our participation in **Economic and Monetary Union**, as well as in the initiatives for social integration of the euro area countries. We also need a **European Defence Force to complement NATO**, for example, by guarding our external borders.”²⁶ Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, National Assembly, 07.07.2017.

²³ Original text in Bulgarian: “Перспективите за фрагментация на ЕС след референдума във Великобритания изглеждат все по-реални. Съществуването на различни нива на интеграция на страните - членки в ЕС, е източник на нестабилност. Ние се обявяваме за запазване на единството на ЕС и приветстваме бъдещо задълбочаване на интеграцията между държавите членки. Реформите в ЕС трябва да се основават на принципите и ценностите на европейската солидарност и равноправие при взаимно зачитане на интересите и доверието между държавите членки.”

²⁴ See also the article “All Bulgarian MEPs, across party lines, except one, are mobilised against the ‘Macron package’,” available at <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/eastern-europe-mobilises-against-macrons-mobility-package/>

²⁵ Original text in Bulgarian: “Категорично сме за европейски енергиен съюз, защото сме - братска Русия продава на братска България най-скъпия газ в Европа. Ако има енергиен съюз, ще имаме по-ниска цена на газа” Воуко Борисов, 08.05.2014

²⁶ Original text in Bulgarian: „Засилващата интеграция е това, към което се стремим в развитието на Европа. На тази основа е нужно и задълбочаване на участието ни в Икономическия и валутен съюз, както и в инициативите за социална интеграция на страните от Евророната. Имаме нужда и от Европейски сили за отбрана, който да допълнят НАТО например при охраната на външните ни граници.”

In terms of DI models, the results indicate the existence of a ‘core-periphery’ discourse in official statements since the very beginning of Bulgaria’s EU membership, with the understanding that Bulgaria had to catch-up with high European standards by abiding by the rules.

“The Union is not a horn of plenty, figuratively speaking; it is not a buffet for poor relatives on the European **periphery**, but a **system of strict rules, norms and requirements**.”²⁷ President Georgi Parvanov, Formal plenary sitting of the national assembly dedicated to Bulgaria’s membership of the European Union and to the European agenda of the national assembly, 11.01.2017.

A separate search for DI models in official government speeches (Prime Ministers and Presidents) in the context of the Future of Europe debate indicates that the emergence of two-speed and multiple-speed Europe is considered by the Bulgarian government in the same ‘catch-up’ and ‘fully-fledged EU membership’ discourse.

fight with our own demons for the **different speeds of the European Union**, this is not a conversation about geography, not a struggle for profit. This is a conversation: FOR our own ambitions; FOR the readiness to **accelerate our development**; FOR our **responsibility** to the Bulgarian citizens, who invariably declare support for our European membership.”²⁸ Speech by Caretaker Prime Minister Ognian Gerdjikov in a public discussion ‘The Future of Europe and the Bulgarian presidency of the EU’ organised by PanEuropa Bulgaria, 16.03.2017.

“Bulgaria has to solve a very important issue regarding the public attitude towards the EU. We must achieve our **full integration**, enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon, and that means joining the euro area and the Schengen area. This means **being full members of the EU, actively participating in all pillars and policies for decision-making**. Bulgaria has not yet held a fully-fledged debate on both the benefits and risks on the road to the euro area and what to do to minimise these risks. There are risks, but they must be explained to the public and we must have a clear plan to overcome them.”²⁹ Conference speech by President Radev, ‘The EU: Going Know-Where?’, organised by the Institute of Economics and International Relations and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 24.06.2020.

DI Mechanisms were indirectly commented on by President Radev in the same speech in 2020:

"If the EU has the ambition to be a leading force on the world stage, as is written in the Union's strategy papers, **we need to make the EU's decision-making mechanism much faster**. Decisions in the EU are sometimes made very slowly and therefore become ineffective. Especially when we have strategic sprinters as fast as sprinters, and we act on marathon principles.”³⁰ Conference speech by President Radev, ‘The EU: Going Know-Where?’, organised by the Institute of Economics and International Relations and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 24.06.2020.

²⁷ Original text in Bulgarian: “Съюзът не е рог на изобилието, образно казано, не е шведска маса за бедните роднини от европейската периферия, а система от строги правила, норми и изисквания.”

²⁸ Original text in Bulgarian: “Нека не се заблуждаваме – когато говорим за ядро и периферия на Съюза, когато се борим със собствените си демони за различните скорости на Европейския съюз, това е разговор не за география, не борба за печалба. Това е разговор: ЗА собствените ни амбиции; ЗА готовността да ускорим развитието си; ЗА отговорността ни към българските граждани, които неизменно заявяват подкрепа за европейското ни членство.”

²⁹ Original text in Bulgarian: “За обществените нагласи към ЕС – България има да решава много важен въпрос. Ние трябва да постигнем нашата пълноценна интеграция, заложенa в Лисабонския договор, а това означава присъединяване към еврозоната и Шенгенското пространство. Това означава да бъдем пълноправни членове в ЕС, да участваме активно във всички стълбове и политики за вземане на решения. Все още в България не е проведен пълноценен дебат и за ползите, и за рисковете по пътя към еврозоната и какво да направим, за да минимизираме тези рискове. Рискове има, но те трябва да бъдат разяснени на обществото и трябва да имаме ясен план как ще ги преодоляваме.”

³⁰ Original text in Bulgarian: “Ако ЕС има амбиция да бъде водеща сила на световната сцена, така както е написано в стратегическите документи на Съюза, трябва да направим механизма за вземане на решение в ЕС много по-бърз. Решенията в ЕС се вземат понякога изключително мудно и по тази причина стават ниско ефективни. Особено когато срещу себе си имаме бързи като спринтьори стратегически играчи, а ние действваме на маратонски принципи.”

DI models and mechanisms were also present in Prime Minister Borissov's interventions during parliamentary discussions, for example:

“Scenarios related to a **Europe at different speeds** can only be considered acceptable if they are based on the will of a member country to decide for itself where it wants to be and not of another to determine its place. Bulgaria has an interest in participating in a strong and united Europe with more integration. I am convinced that the place of **our country is in the core, not in the periphery of the European Union**. Of particular importance to us is our inclusion in the Schengen area and in the eurozone, and Bulgaria successfully meets the criteria set out in the Stability and Growth Pact. Enhancing integration is what we are striving for in the development of Europe. On this basis, we need to **deepen our participation** in Economic and Monetary Union, as well as in the initiatives for social integration of the euro area countries. We also need a European Defence Force to complement NATO, for example by guarding our external borders.”³¹ Prime Minister Borissov, debate in the national parliament, 07.07.2017.

Illustrative of the political language when it comes to using the terms ‘two-speed/multiple-speed Europe’ and their connotations of second-class membership are the following parliamentary interventions by opposing party MPs:

“[...] not enough that the Bulgarian (citizen) generally does not eat quality food because of the prevailing poverty, but even when he allows himself to buy something ‘more branded’ he encounters **a double standard**, as if he is a **second-class person** [...] **new Member States, we are not second-hand people**. There is a Common Market and such an approach is not ethical, it is not moral. [...] We once again knelt before the leaders of the privileged countries of Brussels. But even for the food – to drive it by two standards – this seems to be too much [...]”³² Georgi Goekov, BSP, National Parliament, 19.05.2017.

“[...] The policy of protectionism in the European Union is as old as the European Union. The point is it's getting clearer now. [...] Just because we say these things does not mean that we are not pro-European. Let us dispel this delusion and the attempts at criticism that will come from certain circles in Bulgaria or from certain political forces outside the parliament. To be a European, to be a pro-European is exactly what this means – to fight the things that give rise to the **centrifugal forces in the European Union, which divide the European Union into zones, speeds, big, big, small and so on**. That is why we from the MRF, being a pro-European party, will fight against these things in the European Union, to protect business, for all countries **to have equal rights**, and not just on paper.”³³ MP Yordan Tsonev (MRF), National Parliament, 11.05.2018.

³¹ Original text in Bulgarian: “Сценариите, свързани с Европа на различни скорости, могат да бъдат считани за приемливи само, ако се базират на волята на дадена страна – член сама да решава къде иска да бъде, а не друг да определя мястото ѝ. България има интерес да участва в силна и обединена Европа с повече интеграция. Убеден съм, че мястото на страната ни е в ядрото, а не в периферията на Европейския съюз. От особено значение за нас е включването ни в Шенгенското пространство и в Евророната, и България успешно покрива критериите, заложи в Пакта за стабилност и растеж. Засилващата интеграция е това, към което се стремим в развитието на Европа. На тази основа е нужно и задълбочаване на участието ни в Икономическия и валутен съюз, както и в инициативите за социална интеграция на страните от Евророната. Имаме нужда и от Европейски сили за отбрана, които да допълнят НАТО например при охраната на външните ни граници.”

³² Original text in Bulgarian: “Не стига, че българинът по принцип не се храни с качествена храна заради царящата беднотия, но дори когато си позволи да си купи нещо „по-марково“, той се натъква на двоен стандарт, сякаш е човек второ качество [...] Макар че сме нови страни членки, не сме хора втора ръка. Има Общ пазар и такъв подход не е етичен, не е морален. ...Ние отново клекнахме пред началниците от привилегированите страни от Брюксел. Но чак и за храните да я караме по два стандарта – това като че ли идва в повече на българите [...]”

³³ Original text in Bulgarian: “[...] политиката на протекционизъм в Европейския съюз е стара колкото Европейския съюз. Въпросът е, че сега става по-явна. [...] Това, че ние заявяваме тези неща, не означава, че не сме проевропейци. Нека да разсеем тази заблуда и опитите за критики, които ще дойдат от определени кръгове в България или от определени политически сили извън парламента. Да си европеец, да си проевропеец точно това означава – да се бориш с нещата, които поражда центробежните сили в Европейския съюз, които разделят Европейския съюз на зони, скорости, големи, едри, малки и така нататък. Затова ние от ДПС, бъдейки проевропейска партия, ще се борим срещу тези неща в Европейския съюз, да се защитава бизнесът, всички страни да имат равни права, а да не е само на книга.”

References in government programmes to the European Union

Having said this, we continue with a short list of the main EU-related priorities of consecutive governments.

- **Keeping commitments:** The qualitative analysis confirms that in the period under review successive Bulgarian governments declared clear commitments to fulfilling the obligations deriving from EU membership (here we also include commitments on meeting benchmarks under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM), the leverage of which has played a role in government attitudes to necessary reforms³⁴). In 2008, the progress achieved under the CVM by the Stanishev Government remained insufficient and most of the financial sanctions with regard to the pre-accession funds were left in place and the operational programmes did not get a green light. For the three governments of the GRRB political party which ruled the country for most of the time after 2009, effective management and absorption of EU funds was a special priority in governance programmes. The 2017-21 programme included lifting of the CVM as a priority.
- **Completing European integration:** In 2009-2012, with the first GERB government, there was already a declared effort to “complete the European integration of the country by **joining the Economic and Monetary Union and the inclusion of Bulgaria in the Schengen area.**” ‘Accelerated accession’ remained a priority for 2012-2017, while the wording used in the 2017-2021 government programme already involved ‘political efforts’ towards joining. This can be seen as an admission of the fact that the EU’s assessment of Bulgaria’s readiness is a political rather than a technical issue.
- **Catching-up:** After 2009 the ambition to catch up with EU standards in terms of Bulgaria’s modernisation and economic development, as well as in terms of continuing harmonisation of legislation in EU common policy fields, including transposition of the new directives of the European Union into national legislation, remained stable. Efficient allocation and use of European funds towards convergence of the economy to the average EU level is an evergreen priority in government programmes.
- **Active participation in policy-making** in the process of creating and implementing the common policies of the Union, while at the same time defending national interests; making Bulgaria a key factor for stability in the region and the world, a respected member of the EU; active involvement by Bulgaria in the objectives of Common European Foreign Policy, including the European Security and Defence Policy, in accordance with national priorities and capabilities; active contribution by Bulgaria in forming the concept of the creation of a European Energy Union (2017-2021).

3.3.1 2008 – The Lisbon Treaty

The government’s position

The government’s position was a strong pro-European stance. Certain DI instances, such as regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights, CFSP and energy policy were perceived by the government as sources of a stronger Europe and as an opportunity for Bulgarian citizens and Bulgarian society to defend national interests within the framework of the common European policy.

³⁴ The leverage of the CVM is questioned by the expert community in several ways. However, the author agrees that “the role of the CVM at the level of public opinion and civil society, and as a mechanism that contributes to ‘sandwiching’ reform-reluctant Bulgarian governments between pressure from Brussels and domestic pressure for reforms” should not be underestimated. See Primatariva, Antoinette, “On High Stakes, Stakeholders and Bulgaria’s EU Membership” April 2010, available at <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/114647/WP27.pdf>

According to a 2009 analysis by the Ministry of Defence,³⁵ the priorities declared by the First Borissov government, such as placing Bulgaria “at the centre of European policies,” “making the country a key factor for stability in the region and the world,” “active foreign policy,” “modern defence policy,” “defence and security relevant to NATO and the EU” and “participation in missions and contribution to collective NATO and EU defence and in NATO and EU defence programmes and projects,” were a serious challenge, especially “in the current context of economic crisis and an increasingly limited defence budget, in which the ‘easy’ answers to the above questions are usually contradictory and often mutually exclusive.”

The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was voted on in the Bulgarian Parliament on 21 March 2008, with 195 votes for and 15 votes against.

During his speech in the national parliament on the occasion of the ratification, Prime minister Sergei Stanishev said it was only natural in view of the enlargement of the European Union, and in response to the new challenges in the world, to find a **new basis and new instruments**, so that the European Union became both **more efficient and more transparent, more comprehensible to citizens and at the same time deepened its integration in areas that are important to European citizens**.

"I am sure that both most Europeans and most Bulgarian citizens want no less European Union and no less Europe, but more, of course, preserving our national identity, seeking our national interests in harmony with other European nations and exercising civilian and national control over the development of the European Union [...], the success of the Lisbon Treaty is very important for the whole future of Europe. [...] Bulgaria actively participated and strongly and consistently supported both the German and Portuguese presidencies in the course of the negotiations on the Reform Treaty [...] Our understanding was that major institutional changes contribute to increasing the democracy, efficiency and transparency of the European Union. [...] I call on the Members of Parliament to support the Treaty of Lisbon, because it will be a success for Europe, it will make it stronger, more democratic, more effective, closer to the people. The implementation of this treaty will be a success for both our country and the Bulgarian citizens, so that we can live with the self-confidence of the citizens of a prosperous democratic legal state in a democratic and growing European Union in the global world."³⁶ Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister (BSP), Bulgarian Parliament, 21.03.2008.

The Minister of European Affairs Gergana Grancharova emphasised the fact that for the first time Bulgaria was participating as a full member in the decision-making process on the future of the EU:

“Today we are probably several hours away from the moment when the Bulgarian Parliament will ratify the Treaty of Lisbon. And this will be **the first European consensus, in the construction of which Bulgaria participated from its very beginning to its final** – with our representatives in the Convention, with our observers in the European Parliament, with real MEPs, with the Bulgarian government now as an EU Member State.”³⁷

³⁵ https://www.mod.bg/bg/doc/cooperation/EC/Lisboa_Treaty_Report.pdf

³⁶ Original quote in Bulgarian: “Аз съм сигурен, че както повечето европейци, така и повечето български граждани искат не по-малко Европейски съюз и не по-малко Европа, а повече, разбира се, запазвайки нашата национална идентичност, търсейки нашите национални интереси в хармония с другите европейски народи и упражнявайки граждански и национален контрол върху развитието на Европейския съюз [...] успехът на Лисабонския договор е много важен за цялото бъдеще на Европа. [...] България участваше активно и подкрепяше силно и последователно и германското, и португалското председателство в хода на преговорите по договора за реформа [...] Нашето разбиране беше, че основните институционални промени допринасят за повишаване демократичността, ефективността и прозрачността на Европейския съюз. [...] Затова се обръщам към народните представители с призив да подкрепят Лисабонския договор, защото той ще бъде успех за Европа, ще я направи по-силна, по-демократична, по-ефективна, по-близка до хората. Прилагането на този договор ще бъде успех и за нашата страна, и за българските граждани, така че да живеем със самочувствието на граждани на просперираща, демократична, правова държава, в един демократичен и все по-силен Европейски съюз в глобалния свят.”

³⁷ Original quote in Bulgarian: „Днес вероятно няколко часа ни делят от момента, в който българският парламент ще ратифицира Договора от Лисабон. И това ще е първият европейски консенсус, в чието изграждане България участваше от самото му начало до неговия финал – с наши представители в Конвента, със свои наблюдатели в

At the same time, for the first time since the beginning of Bulgaria's EU accession process, there was a political party in the Bulgarian parliament (the ultra-nationalist party 'Attack') that declared itself outside the established national European consensus and voted against the Lisbon Treaty. Votes against were also cast by independent MPs who had left the Attack parliamentary faction some time before. The motives for this vote are that through ratification of the Treaty the country lost its national sovereignty and in future all important political decisions would be made by Brussels.

The opposition's position

The arguments of the opposition ultra-nationalist party Attack (Coalition Ataka) against the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty referred to fears of increasing pressure by the "core of the EU" on the poorer countries, the possibility of further limiting national sovereignty and the creation of a European superpower.

"Here (The Lisbon Treaty), however, is the aspiration of the core of the European Union of richer countries to secure their selfish interests over the whole community, imposing a disproportionate distribution of the benefits and costs of the integration process, especially on the newly admitted countries. The asymmetric approach to this distribution can only be to the detriment of smaller and poorer countries, which require sufficient guarantees by consensus or a full majority in votes on key issues of cooperation, as well as a fair asymmetric distribution between the powers of certain states." MP Stanislav Stanilov (Coalition Ataka), Bulgarian Parliament, 21 March 2008.

During the discussion in the parliament most of the MPs generally put the main emphasis on the treaty from the point of view of their political affiliations – the treaty was presented as a step towards social Europe, an opportunity for more subsidiarity, less bureaucracy etc.

"We in the opposition expected to hear political speeches from the government, but instead we heard several concise retellings of the Lisbon Treaty. There is no doubt that this is a significant event for Bulgaria, because through this ratification we, the Bulgarians, are deciding on the future of Europe. [...] Today, when Bulgaria is shaken by another corruption scandal and obvious conflicts of interest, Bulgarian citizens hope to strengthen the control by the European institutions."³⁸ Nedzhda Mihaylova, (ODF) Bulgarian Parliament, 21 March 2008.

During the same debate in the national parliament, members of the government parties and of the opposition sought to defend the Lisbon Treaty for its role in securing citizen participation, social justice, economic growth, fundamental rights and a common foreign and security policy:

"We believe **that a strong European Union is in the national interest of Bulgaria**. As proposed to us, the Treaty of Lisbon provides more opportunities for building a strong European Union. This is especially important for Bulgaria, being at the external border of the European Union. For us, in the debate that has taken place within the European Union on whether to create a union in which relations are weaker and there are no common systems, no common foreign policy, no common defence or security system, it was in Bulgaria's national interest to have such a common foreign and security policy."³⁹ Ekaterina Mhaylova, (DSB) Bulgarian Parliament, 21 March 2008.

Европейския парламент, с реални евродепутати, с българското правителство вече като правителство на държава – член на Европейския съюз." Minister of European Affairs Gergana, National Parliament, 21.03.2018.

³⁸ Original quote in Bulgarian: "Ние от опозицията очаквахме да чуем политически изказвания от управляващите, а вместо това чуваме няколко сбити преразказа на Лисабонския договор. Няма съмнение, че това е знаменателно събитие за България, защото чрез тази ратификация ние, българите, се произнасяме по бъдещето на Европа. [...] Днес, когато България се тресе от поредните корупционни скандали и очевидни конфликти на интереси, българските граждани с надежда очакват засилване на контрола от страна на европейските институции."

³⁹ Original quote in Bulgarian: Ние смятаме, че един силен Европейски съюз е националният интерес на България. Във вида, в който ни се предлага, Лисабонският договор дава повече възможности за изграждането на силен европейски съюз. Особено за България това е важно, намирайки се на външна граница на Европейския съюз. За нас дебатът, който беше воден в рамките на Европейския съюз, за това дали да се направи един съюз, в който връзките да са по-слаби и да няма изградени общи системи, да няма обща външна политика, обща система за отбрана или

“The Treaty of Lisbon guarantees even **more the fundamental rights and freedoms of European citizens**. It preserves existing rights and introduces new ones and not only creates new rights but also strengthens the guarantees for their protection. [...] The Treaty of Lisbon improves the European Union's ability to act in several policy areas that are a priority for the Union and its citizens today, namely freedom, security and justice, the fight against terrorism and crime, energy policy, climate change, public health and others. This contract guarantees increased security for all.”⁴⁰
Fatme Ilyaz, (MRF), Bulgarian Parliament, 21 March 2008.

The increased role of national parliaments in EU decision-making stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty was mentioned several times, both by the ruling party and by the opposition, as an important and very welcome step ahead, while Bulgaria's capacity to meet high expectations in terms of the MPs' expertise on EU matters was called into question.

3.3.2 2012 – the eurozone, Schengen and the Fiscal Compact Treaty

i. eurozone accession

The government's position

Bulgarian politicians and economists demonstrated a strong interest in the European common currency already before Bulgaria's entry in the EU.⁴¹ The Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Simeon Dyankov (2009-2013) were the first to officially submit the question about Bulgaria's accession to the eurozone to the European Commission. However, troubles with the Bulgarian fiscal deficit after the global financial crisis and the uncertainties related to the European debt crisis along with the eurozone restructuring predicaments rendered it impossible for Bulgaria to apply for ERM II at that time

The opposition's position

In general, all the important Bulgarian political parties support the strategy of accession to the eurozone, but with different views about the speed and the preconditions required. The most frequent objection is that the country should first more successfully catch up with the eurozone countries and only after substantially closing the gap in terms of GDP per capita can Bulgaria carry on with adopting the euro.

Our conclusions can be summarised as follows. First, the government and all the important political parties in Bulgaria support accession to the eurozone, although with different views about the speed and sequencing of the necessary economic measures.

ii. Schengen

The coalition government of Sergei Stanshev in its 2005-2009 programme declared “Economic development in accordance with the criteria of the European Monetary Union” and “Adherence to the Maastricht criteria, which will lead to the smooth introduction of the euro.”

Bulgaria is among the only four EU countries that are still not part of the Schengen area, alongside Romania, Croatia and Cyprus, not including the UK and Ireland, which chose to opt out. The European

сигурност, беше за националния интерес на България да има такава обща външна политика и политика на сигурност.

⁴⁰ Original quote in Bulgarian: Договорът от Лисабон гарантира в още по-голяма степен основните права и свободи на европейските граждани. Той запазва съществуващите права и въвежда нови и не само създава нови права, но и засилва гаранциите за тяхната защита. [...] Договорът от Лисабон подобрява способността на Европейския съюз да действа в няколко политически области, които днес са приоритет на Съюза и на неговите граждани, а именно: свобода, сигурност и правосъдие, борба с тероризма и с престъпността, енергийната политика, изменението на климата, общественото здраве и други. С този договор се гарантира повишена сигурност за всички.

⁴¹ See Ganchev, Gancho, “In or out? The Politics of Euro Accession for Eastern European Member States”, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Sofia, 2019: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sofia/15666.pdf>

Parliament members called on the admission of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen Zone in June 2011 for the first time. Since then, the MEPs have shown their support several times.

For 10 years this has been one of the foreign policy goals of the country, and Borisov has always insisted that the country should become part of Schengen, always claiming that it has long fulfilled the technical criteria for membership. The main obstacle to acceptance remains the problem of corruption and judicial reform in the country, due to which a monitoring mechanism operates.

iii. The Fiscal Compact Treaty

The government's position

Regarding the Fiscal Compact, Bulgaria decided to opt in following PM Borissov's announcement at the Brussels European summit on 8-9 December 2011. The Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce⁴² and Industry fiercely criticised the Prime Minister for not being aware of the commitment made and for not consulting on Bulgaria's position with stakeholders. As Euinside commented,⁴³ the only official Bulgarian position on the then draft treaty came from the then Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolay Mladenov, who explained on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of Bulgaria's accession to the EU that the conclusion of the negotiations for a new 'fiscal union' of the EU was a priority task for the Member States and that Bulgaria would not make any financial commitments requiring additional instalments to the IMF or other financial institutions. "*We say 'Yes' to fiscal discipline and 'No' to interference in our right to follow an independent tax policy,*" Mladenov was quoted as saying on the foreign ministry's web page.⁴⁴ Following this, on January 2012 the Bulgarian Parliament adopted the decision for Bulgaria to participate in the European Fiscal Pact. The majority voted in favour (178 deputies voted, 129 were in favour, 1 against, 48 abstained). On 2 March 2012 Bulgaria acceded to the agreement with the exception of the part related to the coordination of economic policies. "Bulgaria will apply the provisions of the part of the agreement that reaffirms the Maastricht criteria for fiscal discipline, i.e. achieving a balanced budget or budget surplus, a structural deficit of up to 1% of GDP with a gross government debt-to-GDP ratio below 60%," reads the announcement by the Bulgarian government.

The opposition's position

The main opposition party leader Sergei Stanishev (BSP) urged to not rush the signing of the Treaty:

"There is a very dangerous tendency inherent in the approach that has been imposed in the formation of this intergovernmental treaty – bypassing the Community method, ignoring the European Parliament, the European Commission to a lesser extent, but also. And this puts a serious time bomb to turn Europe more and **more into a Europe of several groups on different issues, at two, at three speeds.** And this is a huge risk. [...] I do not understand why a government that declares an ambitious policy is abandoning the fourth section (of the Treaty). This is the only section that talks about the real Bulgarian national priorities such as convergence, growth, overcoming unemployment, job creation. This is exactly what we are giving up, because of the imaginary fear for the time being regarding the tax policy that may be **imposed on us.** Believe me, if these same big ones decide to impose something on us, they will impose it without this chapter and without this contract. [...] Therefore, for all these reasons, both pan-European and the approach of the Bulgarian government, we cannot support this draft decision. There remains an open question that needs to be discussed very seriously, since the government has apparently decided to join, and only the restrictive fiscal part of this draft treaty – how do we ratify it? First, there is no need for Bulgaria to hurry with this process. Twelve eurozone countries need to ratify it for it to take effect. Second, our

⁴² "Is there a Bulgarian position on the fiscal pact and what is it?" <https://www.bcci.bg/pressview/700>

⁴³ See Marini, Adelina, "The Fiscal Pact and Bulgaria: Close Encounters of the Third Kind", 18.01.2012, <http://www.euinside.eu/en/analyses/the-fiscal-compact-and-bulgaria>

⁴⁴ As of August 2020 the URL is not valid and no original government statements can be retrieved.

status is not clear at all, when we will be invited there, how long we will be present, **whether our voice can be heard in this new, imaginary format at all**. Third, some countries, such as the Czech prime minister, have already said they will have to hold a referendum. This issue, this policy is long-term and serious commitments are being made. I believe that the topic of these policies, enshrined in this draft agreement, is one of the leading ones in determining the positions of the various parties in Bulgaria for the next parliamentary elections. And I do not rule out the possibility of raising the issue of a referendum, because we really have very serious tasks ahead of us.”⁴⁵ Sergei Stanishev (BSP), National Parliament, 27.01.2012.

From statements by Martin Dimitrov and Ivan Kostov it became clear that the ‘Blue Coalition’ would also support the pact. “*We are a country that can enter the eurozone right now. It should be open to countries that create stability, not problems,*”⁴⁶ said Ivan Kostov.

3.3.3 2017-2020: The Future of Europe, Schengen and the eurozone

i. The Future of Europe debate

The government’s position

The future of Europe is not mentioned in any of the programmes of successive Bulgarian governments in the period under review. However, subsequently with the presentation of the EC White Paper it became clear to the government that the debate on the future of the EU was naturally linked to the discussion on the priorities of the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2018. The facts that the presidency was the first for Bulgaria, and that it followed shortly after the presentation of Junker’s White Paper, were actually an opportunity for the country to play a central role in the discussion and the shaping of European Union policies.

According to the Minister of the European presidency of Bulgaria Lilyana Pavlova, after 2020 a balance had to be found in two directions in which she sees Bulgaria’s contribution: making the EU financial instruments more efficient and preserving the cohesion funds, which are extremely important for the poorer regions in Bulgaria. From this it can be concluded that the main considerations and concerns of the Bulgarian government in the debate on the future of the EU were related to the danger

⁴⁵ Original text in Bulgarian: “Има много опасна тенденция, заложена в подхода, който е наложен при формирането на този междуправителствен договор – заобикалянето на общностния метод, игнорирането на Европейския парламент, на Европейската комисия в по-малка степен, но също така. И това залага една сериозна бомба със закъснител за превръщане на Европа все повече в Европа на няколко групи по различни въпроси, на две, на три скорости. И това е огромен риск. [...] Аз не разбирам защо правителството, което заявява амбициозна политика, се отказва от Четвъртия раздел. Това е единственият раздел, в който се говори за реалните български национални приоритети като конвергенция, растеж, преодоляване на безработицата, създаване на работни места. Точно от това се отказваме, заради имажинерния засега страх по отношение на данъчната политика, която може да ни бъде наложена. Повярвайте, ако решат същите тези големи да ни наложат нещо, ще го наложат и без тази глава и без този договор. [...] Затова, поради всички тези причини, и обоевропейските, и подхода на българското правителство, не можем да подкрепим това проекторешение. Остава един открит въпрос, който трябва да се обсъди много сериозно, след като очевидно правителството е решило да се присъедини и то само към ограничителната фискална част от този проектодоговор – по какъв начин го ратифицираме. Първо, няма нужда България да бърза с този процес. Трябва дванадесет страни от Евроразоната да го ратифицират, за да влезе в сила. Второ, изобщо не е ясен нашият статут, кога ще ни поканят там, колко ще присъстваме, ще може ли изобщо нашият глас да бъде чул в този нов, измислен формат. Трето, някои страни, като премиерът на Чехия например, вече заявиха, че ще трябва да направят референдум. Този въпрос, тази политика е дългосрочна и се поемат сериозни ангажименти. Смятам, че темата за тези политики, записани в този проектодоговор, е една от водещите за определяне на позициите на различните партии в България за следващите парламентарни избори. И не изключвам възможността да се постави въпросът и за референдум, защото действително пред нас стоят много сериозни задачи.”

⁴⁶ Original text in Bulgarian: „Ние сме страна, която в момента може да влезе в Евроразоната. Тя трябва да се отвори за страните, които пораждат стабилност, а не проблеми.”

of depriving the country of much-needed financial support coming from the EU's structural and cohesion funds.⁴⁷

The position of the government on the White Book for the Future of Europe was presented by Prime Minister Boyko Borissov in the national assembly on 14 July 2017 and is expressed in the following:

“The truth of this White Paper is that we must not allow, first, a Europe of two or more speeds and, second, cohesion to fall away. That's it.”⁴⁸

According to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ekaterina Zaharieva, who was tasked with regularly reporting on progress in the CEAOEF, the analysis by the government revealed that **“we (Bulgaria) want more integration sooner.”**⁴⁹

When it came to concrete positions addressing the White Book, the Bulgarian government was cautious, waiting to see how the discussion in the EU would develop. Besides reporting on technical progress, an in-depth discussion with specific considerations and proposals regarding Future of Europe scenarios did not take place in the Bulgarian Parliament in 2018. There is no evidence that the topic remained on the parliamentary agenda in the following two years.

A 2017 report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the level of implementation of the approved policies and programmes stated that “the results of the analysis contained in the Bulgarian Framework Position on the FOE approved by the Council for European Affairs (CEA) on 13 November 2017 showed that none of the presented scenarios for the future of the EU meet in its pure form the national interests of Bulgaria.” Further on, the report says that “Each of the five models contains both opportunities and challenges. Both should be the subject of constant analysis in order to ensure the possibility for Bulgaria to make optimal use of the debates and the decisions that will be formulated in their course.”

In 2017-2018, debates on the future of Europe took place in the context of discussions on the priorities of the Bulgarian presidency. According to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bulgarian positions were also presented to the Bulgarian public through a number of public events (conferences, discussions) by representatives of the leadership of the MFA, and the Prime Minister participated in a number of meetings.

The oppositions' position

Representatives of the largest opposition party (the Bulgarian Socialist Party) often expressed discontent at the fact that the Prime Minister did not report to MPs⁵⁰ and bypassed the legislature in formulating

⁴⁷ Moraliyska, Monika, “White Book on the Future of Europe and its Repercussions in Bulgaria” in “The EU after 2020: in search of identity, sustainability and growth” Reports from the Annual conference of the Bulgarian Association for European Studies, Sofia, 26 October 2017 <http://www.becsa-bg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-BESA-Conference-Papers.pdf>

⁴⁸ Original text in Bulgarian: “Истината в тази Бяла книга е, че не трябва да допуснем, първо, Европа на две или повече скорости и, второ, кохезията да отпадне. Това е.”

⁴⁹ Original text in Bulgarian: “нашият анализ и нашият прочит – ние искаме повече интеграция по-скоро”. Стенограма от заседание на Комисия по европейските въпроси и контрол на европейските фондове от 13.06.2008.

⁵⁰ Note by the author of the report: In the last 3 years and 8 months, Prime Minister Borissov was present only 6 times in the National Parliament (reference: www.parliament.bg). On 06.02.2019 the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds at the National Assembly (CEAOEF) adopted a report with recommendations on strengthening the role of the National Assembly on European issues. According to the report, “new priorities and ambitious goals were needed to strengthen the role of Bulgaria and the National Assembly in the development and reform of united Europe. The National Assembly may hold a hearing of the Prime Minister on the position of the Republic of Bulgaria in forthcoming meetings of the European Council, as stipulated in Art. 126 of the Parliament's rules of procedure”. The report notes that since the launch of the 44th National Assembly no such hearing was held.

national priorities. This issue was raised particularly sharply in connection with the formulation of Bulgarian EU Council presidency priorities:

“I set you one condition – **all issues of the presidency are to be decided in parliament**, because this (Bulgaria) is a parliamentary republic and before you go anywhere and express a position, let's discuss it here and accept it, and you will have our support, because this is a cause for Bulgaria. You promised, you said yes, we will do great in parliament. Of course, you lied to me, Mr. Borissov. You go, you make commitments. **The Bulgarian parliament knows nothing**. You say now that the national programme for the EU presidency is still being discussed and will be adopted, but you have already signed the priorities with the Trio. At the same time, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that your Estonian colleague, before signing, stood before the Estonian Parliament and spoke there, and received support before signing. You have signed something, and the national programme will be presented in September. Here is why, because you disrespect Parliament, because you are missing the presidency....”⁵¹ BSP Leader Kornelia Ninova, National Assembly, 07.07.2017.

“**The most anti-European, the most dangerous thing at the moment for the future of Europe, is silence** – your silence, Mr. Prime Minister, on these issues (annual financial framework, migration, future of Europe debate)! That is why we insist that you submit to the Bulgarian Parliament the Draft Budget for Europe for the next programming period, discuss together, find common ground with our national interest, give you a mandate and give you the strength to present it, and to defend it **in the common European interest, to be equal with others**, with strength and self-confidence, and not obedient to others!”⁵² BSP Leader Kornelia Ninova, National Parliament, 08.06.2018.

Coming back to the opposition's position on the FOE, it can be summarised that the Bulgarian Socialist Party shares the view that "the EU must be preserved as an equal union" and strongly opposes the formalisation of a Europe at various speeds.

“[...] At the moment, there are red lines from which Bulgaria should not back down in defending its position. [...] A serious signal for the future of Europe will be the negotiation of the European Union budget for the next programming period in view of the current challenges and taking into account the UK's exit from the Union. Practical solidarity and cohesion need to be reaffirmed as horizontal principles in all Union action. Cohesion and the catching-up of the new Member States are key to the unity and overall development of the European Union. [...] There will be time for debate, but there is also something really important for us. The European Union must remain a community of equal actors. **We are against violating the unity and integrity of the Union by differentiating the goals of integration or by configuring some kind of 'multidimensional' Europe or 'Europe at different speeds.'** Otherwise, it will make Europe more complex, more difficult to understand, more inconsistent and less able to address current difficulties effectively. **The formalisation of a 'Europe at different speeds' or 'circles of integration' would not be seen**

⁵¹ Original text in Bulgarian: “Поставих Ви едно условие – всички въпроси по председателството да се решават в парламента, защото това е парламентарна република и преди да ходите, където и да е навън, и да изразявате позиция, да я обсъдим тук и да я приемем, и Вие ще имате нашата подкрепа, защото това е кауза за България. Вие обещахте, казахте – да, чудесно ще го правим в парламента. Разбира се, Вие ме излъгахте, господин Борисов. Отивате, поемате ангажименти. Българският парламент нищо не знае. Казвате сега, че Националната програма по европредседателство тепърва се обсъжда и ще се приема – тепърва, но Вие вече подписахте приоритетите с тройката. При това, обръщам Ви внимание, че колегата Ви от Естония преди да подпише се изправи пред парламента на Естония и говори там, и получи подкрепа преди да подпише. Вие нещо подписахте, а националната програма ще се гледа през септември. Ето защо, поради неуважението Ви към парламента, поради това, че изпускате председателството...”

⁵² Original text in Bulgarian: “Най-антиевропейското, най-опасното в момента за бъдещето на Европа, е мълчанието – Вашето мълчание, господин Премиер, по тези въпроси! Ето защо настояваме да внесете в българския парламент Проекта за бюджет на Европа за следващия програмен период, да дискутираме заедно, да намерим общото с националния си интерес, да Ви дадем мандат и да Ви дадем сила да го представите (шум и реплики), и да го защитите в общия европейски интерес, да бъдете равен с другите, със сила и самочувствие, а не послушен на другите!”

as an exception or a stage in the development of the Member States, but, unfortunately, as a conscious choice. [...]”⁵³ Kristian Vigenin (BSP), National Parliament, 14.07.2017.

The socialists’ vision of the future of Europe and the place of Bulgaria in it was reflected in a document entitled ‘More Social Europe in the People’s Interest,’ which was co-produced with the Socialist and Democrat Group in the EP and PES. Five main priorities are outlined in it: 1. The EU – A Comprehensive Social Union. The main focus is on the rights of European citizens, as opposed to the interests of corporations. Here the right to work, access to education and quality health care should become leading goals of the European Union. 2. **Bulgaria at the core rather than the periphery of the EU** – a clear strategy and consistent state efforts to join Schengen; equal participation by Bulgaria in defence and security policies. 3. Bulgaria – an **active participant, not a passive listener on the European scene**. Future **common decisions in the Union should** take into account the **national interests of individual Member States**. 4. An EU in which cohesion policy is an expression of solidarity and the **elimination of inequalities between Member States**. 5. An EU in which the western Balkans have a clear European perspective and the Black Sea region is the centrepiece of the EU’s efforts in the fields of environment, security and other areas of partnership with the countries in the region.

Former Justice Minister Hristo Ivanov's ‘Yes, Bulgaria’ party was the first to spread a position saying that the risk for Bulgaria in the two-speed Europe scenario is not just of remaining on the periphery but of gradually dropping out of the EU altogether and moving away from any meaningful content of the concept of European membership. “This danger is caused by the fact that the Bulgarian mafia, which pretends to be the political elite, has wasted ten years of our membership. During this time, our main and most important task was to move to the A team in the EU," he said.

At the end of April 2018, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) hosted a meeting of the Party of European Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). MRF leader Mustafa Karadayi called for the EU to become a zone free from radicalism and was **against a multi-speed-Europe**. For the MRF, a scenario in which the EU would develop **at several speeds** was not a solution to common problems; it would only deepen them. In his words, the EU needed a common defence policy within NATO to ensure the prosperity and security of European citizens in an environment of changing geopolitical security.

ii. EMU and Schengen

“Bulgaria has an interest in participating in a strong and united Europe with more integration. I am convinced that the place of our country is in the core, not in the periphery of the European Union. Of particular importance to us is our inclusion in the Schengen area and in the eurozone, and Bulgaria successfully meets the criteria set out in the Stability and Growth Pact.”⁵⁴ Prime Minister Borissov, National Assembly, 07.07.2017.

⁵³ Original text in Bulgarian: “[...] И към момента са налице червени линии, от които България не трябва да отстъпва в отстояването на своята позиция. [...] Сериозен сигнал за бъдещето на Европа ще бъде договарянето на бюджета на Европейския съюз за следващия програмен период с оглед настоящите предизвикателства и вземайки предвид излизането на Обединеното кралство от Съюза. Практическата солидарност и кохезията се нуждаят от препотвърждение като хоризонтални принципи във всички действия на Съюза. Кохезията и догонващото развитие на новите държави членки са от ключово значение за единството и цялостното развитие на Европейския съюз. [...] Ще има време за дебати, но има и нещо наистина важно за нас. Европейският съюз трябва да се запази като общност на равноправни и равнопоставени участници. Против сме нарушаването на единството и целостта на Съюза чрез диференциране на целите на интеграцията или конфигуриране на някакъв вид „многоизмерна“ Европа или „Европа на различни скорости“. В противен случай това ще направи Европа по-сложна, по-трудно разбираема, по-непоследователна и по-неспособна да адресира ефективно настоящите трудности. Формализирането на „Европа на различни скорости“ или „кръгове на интеграция“ би се разглеждало не като изключение или етап от развитие на държавите членки, а, за съжаление, като осъзнат избор. [...]”

⁵⁴ Original text in Bulgarian: „България има интерес да участва в силна и обединена Европа с повече интеграция. Убеден съм, че мястото на страната ни е в ядрото, а не в периферията на Европейския съюз. От особено значение

iii. The eurozone

Although popular support for the adoption of the euro dwindled following the problems with excessive public debt in neighbouring Greece and other countries across the eurozone, **the government kept its priority of entering ERM II and adopting the euro.** Bulgaria's decision to enter the ERM II mechanism in the early summer of 2020, in the midst of the coronavirus crisis, received mixed responses.

Speaking at a forum on 26 June 2018, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov was quoted as saying that the “egotism” of Western countries was putting the future of the European Union at risk: *“Why are you constantly changing the conditions for the eurozone? Where is the risk in Bulgaria being in the eurozone waiting room? It's zero! There is egotism, yes – in the way you are working now, you will break Europe down the middle and this incredible creature will eventually be torpedoed by the egotism of every single state.”*

Opposition's leader Kornelia Ninova said that the BSP should rethink the country's entry into the eurozone with the argument that the country and the banking sector were not yet ready. She called for a debate on how the adoption of the euro would affect the country and its economic development. Finally, on 10 July, Croatia and Bulgaria got the green light from European Union finance ministers to join the European Central Bank's Exchange Rate Mechanism II, a key step on the road to adoption of the euro.

iv. Schengen

Bulgaria and Romania meet all the technical requirements to be accepted in the Schengen area. This is the conclusion of many independent experts and of Bulgarian politicians. In 2018-2020, despite certain hesitation,⁵⁵ **accession to the Schengen area** remained at the top of the Bulgarian agenda and Bulgaria's entry was backed by European leaders on several different occasions.

“All possible criteria for our Schengen membership have been met and there is nothing more to be done by Bulgaria,” stated Prime Minister Boyko Borissov after a meeting with his Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte in the Hague in 2018.

At a conference on the 15th anniversary of the 2004 EU enlargement, “Looking back, looking forward,” in 2019, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said that full membership of the Schengen Area remained a key priority for Bulgaria: *“Schengen is an achievement we must preserve; its future must be a symbol of a united Europe.”*

In a TV interview on national television in 2018, Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Dontchev expressed the opinion that what happened in Bulgaria was a manifestation of double standards. Donchev clarified that Bulgaria bore responsibilities that many of the Schengen countries do not tolerate and that accession to the Schengen area was more a matter of reputation and self-confidence for the country (Panorama, National TV, 02.02.2018).

During the opening of the Bulgarian presidency of the EU (12 January 2018), the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker reiterated that the place of Bulgaria and Romania was in the Schengen area for free movement of people. In December 2018, a majority of MEPs had voted in favour of a resolution that called for the accession of Bulgaria.

за нас е включването ни в Шенгенското пространство и в Евророната, и България успешно покрива критериите, заложиени в Пакта за стабилност и растеж.“

⁵⁵ In 2019 Bulgaria temporarily backed off from its bid to join the Schengen Area due to fears that the country may go through a migrant invasion as soon as it becomes part of the borderless area. *“As far as the Schengen area is concerned, I do not know if it is now convenient for Bulgaria to enter it. We fully use all that the Schengen area offers in the field of the fight against terrorism, [...] smuggling, drug trafficking [...]. Yet we give back to Greece more than 150 people every day. If Alexander tells us ‘today you are joining the Schengen Zone,’ many will arrive in Bulgaria tomorrow,”* Prime Minister Borissov said in a meeting with the President of the Christian Social Union in Bavaria Alexander Dobrindt.

In Bulgaria there are still political voices which are highly critical of Borissov's rule of the country over the last 10 years. According to the DSB opposition party,⁵⁶ although in 2018 the government had demonstrated foreign policy efforts, it had failed to mislead Bulgarian Western partners into patronising its own corruption and oligarchic dependencies. According to DSB, Bulgaria's remaining outside Schengen and the eurozone "poses a danger to Bulgaria's full membership of the EU and creates Euroscepticism among Bulgarian citizens." Lagging behind the core of a "high-speed Europe" would turn Bulgaria into a European periphery, threatened by the influence of non-EU countries and by the corruption, authoritarianism, poverty and geopolitical instability that characterised the western Balkans region.⁵⁷

4. Concluding remarks

This report has shown that European policy and debates on Europe's future are not central in Bulgarian government positions. Governing parties and opposition parties share a clearly negative stance towards models of DI. While the position on DI seems to be independent of context, the position towards deepening European integration seems to be more complex and context-driven. As such, Bulgarian governments have consistently rejected differentiated integration at a conceptual level, while they have favoured European solidarity (e.g. more European funds to support public finance and cohesion), a stronger European Union (e.g. CFSDP, enlargement with the western Balkan countries, given Bulgaria's geographical position) and further consolidation and joint action (i.e. a European energy union) in view of its national interest.

Greater integration in the Schengen area and the eurozone has been a priority for the government and the opposition parties since the country's accession to the EU. The significant salience of DI instances that are perceived by other countries as opt-out mechanisms, i.e. Schengen and the eurozone in the case of Bulgaria, does not indicate the salience of DI, but rather the salience of various 'core state power' policy fields and Bulgaria's ambition to end the current situation of involuntary differentiation.

⁵⁶ Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (Bulgarian: Демократи за силна България, Demokrati za silna Bălgarija, ДСБ, DSB). DSB is a member of the European People's Party (EPP).

⁵⁷ https://clubz.bg/63892-dsb_ne_sme_v_shengen_i_evrozonata_zashtoto_%E2%80%9Ckorupciqta_pravi_silata%E2%80%9D

Appendices

Appendix 1 Overview of the documents analysed

Category of document	Time period	Documents retrieved
1 Government programmes	2007-2020	<p>List of retrieved documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stanishev gov_GovProgramme 2005-2009_bg 2. First Borisov gov_GovProgramme 2009-2013_bg 3. Raykov caretaker gov 2013_priorities_bg 4. Oresharski gov_GovProgramme 2013_bg 5. Bliznashki caretaker gov 2014_priorities_bg 6. Second Borisov gov_GovProgramme 2014-2018_bg 7. Gerdzhikov caretaker gov 2017_priorities_bg 8. Third Borisov gov_GovProgramme 2017-2021_bg
2 First speeches (and parliamentary debates)	2007-2020	<p>The following first speeches after the election of each PM/President in parliament and the subsequent debates were retrieved from the depositary:</p> <p>Presidents Parvanov (2007-2012), Plevneliev (2012-2017) and Radev (2017):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President Parvanov first speech_parliament 19.01.2007_bg 2. President Plevneliev first speech_parliament 19.01.2012_bg 3. President Radev first speech_parliament 19.01.2017_bg <p>PMs: Stanishev, Orcherski, Borisov</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PM Stanishev_opening parliament speech and debate 11.01.2007_bg 2. PM Borisov first speech_parliament and debate 27.07.2009_bg 3. PM Oresharski first speech_parliament and debate 29.05.2013_bg 4. MP Borisov first speech_parliament and debate 07.11.2014_bg 5. 5. MP Borisov first speech_parliament and debate 04.05.2017_bg
3 European Council presidency speeches (and parliamentary debates)	2018-2019	<p>Key parliamentary debates and speeches in relation to the Bulgarian Council presidency in 2018 were retrieved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2017_01_12_Parl. decision on BG EU Presidency position_bg 2. 2017_12_01_Parliament debate_Bulgarian EU Presidency programme_bg 3. 2018_01_17 PM Borisov_Speech_EU2018BG_Priorities_EP_bg 4. 2018_03_07_President Radev speech in parliament on BG EU Presidency_bg 5. 2019_16_01_Debate in EP_BG Presidency priorities_bg

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 2019_16_01_PM Borisov speech_EP_ BG Presidency priorities 7. Boyko_Borissov_Opening_Speech_En 8. Priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU_en 9. Programmeme_Bg_Presidency_Bg 10. Rumens_Radev_Opening_Speech_En
4	Future of Europe speeches and positions	2017-2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2017_01.30_BG MP_Future of Europe discussion_bg 2. 2017_03_09_President Radev_statement_EU council Brussels ref. Future of Europe 3. 2017_03_16_ PM Gerdzhikov speech Futute of Europe_bg 4. 2017_06_02_BICA_WhitePaper 5. 2017_07_7 parliament_debate_Future of Europe_bg 6. 2017_07_14 parliament_debate_Future of Europe_bg 7. 2017_12.13_Foreign Minister Zaharieva_Future of Europe discussion_bg 8. 2017_Economic and Social Council Future of Europe Wite Book_bg 9. 2018_06.13_Foreign Minister Zaharieva_Future of Europe discussion_bg 10. 2018_BSP Vision FOE 11. 2020_06.24_President Radev_conference speech_Future of Europe_bg
5	Head of State European Council Statements	2011-2020	<p>Key speeches and reports on Bulgaria's priorities and activities concerning rotating European Councils by PMs Sergei Stanishev, Boyko Borissov and Plamen Oresharski in the national and the European parliaments were retrieved.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2008_10_22_PM Stanishev report in parliament_Slovenian_French EU presidency_bg 2. 2010_09_02_PM Borissov report in parliament_Spanish_Belgian EU presidency_bg 3. 2011_09_09_PM Borissov report in parliament_Hungarian_Polish EU presidency_bg 4. 2012_02_10_PM Borissov report in parliament_Polish_Dutch EU presidency_bg 5. 2013_02_15_PM Borissov report in parliament_Cyprus_Irish EU presidency_bg 6. 2014_02_06_PM Oresharski report in parliament_Lithuanian_Greek EU presidency_bg 7. 2018_01_17 PM Borissov_Speech_EU2018BG_Priorities_EP_bg 8. 2018_03_07_President Radev speech in parliament on BG EU Presidency_bg 9. 2018_07_13_PM Borissov report in parliament_Bulgarian_Austrian EU presidency_bg 10. 2018_PM Borissov Speech Opening Ceremony BG EU Presidency_en 11. 2019_16_01_PM Borisov speech_EP_ BG Presidency priorities

			Key parliamentary debates and speeches in relation to European Councils were retrieved.	
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2007_08_02_CEADEF_debate German Presidency_bg 2. 2008_03_21_Parliamentary debate_ratification Lisbon treaty_bg 3. 2008_10_22_Debate in parliament_Slovenian_French EU presidency_bg 4. 2010_09_02_Debate in parliament_Spanish_Belgian EU presidency_bg 5. 2011_09_09_Debate in parliament_Hungarian_Polish EU presidency_bg 6. 2012_02_10_Debate in parliament_Polish_Dutch EU presidency_bg 7. 2013_02.12_MEP A.Kovatchev_speech in parliament_bg 8. 2013_02_15_Debate in parliament_Cyprus_Irish EU presidency_bg 9. 2014_02_06_Debate in parliament_Lithuanian_Greek EU presidency_bg 10. 2017_01_12_Parl. decision on BG EU Presidency position_bg 11. 2017_12_01_Parliament debate_Bulgarian EU Presidency programme_bg 12. 2018_07_13_Debate in parliament_Bulgarian_Austrian EU presidency_bg 13. 2019_16_01_Debate in EP_BG Presidency priorities_bg 	
6	Parliamentary (committee) debates	2008; 2012; 2017-2020.	Following the project team's research methodology, the following key words were most salient in the Bulgarian case:	
			Multi-speed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1st : “Европа на две скорости” (two-speed Europe) 2nd : “Европа на няколко скорости; Европейски съюз на различни (много) скорости” (multi-speed Europe)
			Multi-end	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1st : “Ядро; ядро на ЕС, център и периферия” (core Europe) 2nd : none
			Mechanisms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1st : “засилено сътрудничество” (enhanced cooperation) 2nd : none
7	Miscellaneous government speeches referring to DI	2006-2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2007_Parliament Reports on EU Affairs_bg 2. 2008_Parliament Reports on EU Affairs_bg 3. 2009_Parliament Reports on EU Affairs_bg 4. 2011_06.07_MEP A.Kovatchev speech_Schengen_bg 5. 2012_10.31_Bulletin_32_parliament_EU Affairs_bg 6. 2012_12_13_Borissov_two speed Europe Brussels_bg 	

7. 2017_07_00 President Radev on two speed Europe_Brussels__bg
 8. 2018_11_08 Borissov speech_two speed Europe ENP Helzinki__bg
 9. 2018_11_9_Hristo Ivanov_two speed Europe_bg
 10. 2019_03.14_Parliament debate Annaul WP EU Affairs 2019_bg
 11. 2019_05_09_Borissov two speed Europe Sibiu_bg
 12. 2020_03.11_Parliament debate Annaul WP EU Affairs 2020_bg
 13. Framework position Europe 2020
 14. National programme for development of Bulgaria 2020
 15. NRP 2020
 16. NRP_2014
 17. NRP_2008
 18. NRP_2011-2015
 19. NRP_2013
 20. NRP_2007-2009
-

Appendix 2 Translation of key words from English to Bulgarian

English Version	Bulgarian Version	Comments
DI models (Conceptual key words)		
Differentiated integration	Диференцирана интеграция	No matches
Coalition of the willing	Коалиция на желаещите	In the Bulgarian political context, the term ‘coalition of the willing’ is not applicable. It refers to the US-led multinational force – Iraq, the military command during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.
Two-speed Europe	Европа на две скорости	
Multi-speed Europe	Европа на няколко скорости; Европа / ЕС на много скорости;	
Variable Geometry	Променлива геометрия (Европейски съюз)	No matches
Core Europe	Ядро; ядро на ЕС, център и периферия	Other key words (centre and periphery) were used for this search.
Two-tier Europe	Двустепенна Европа	No matches. The term is close to “two-speed Europe”
Concentric circles	Европа на концентричните кръгове; кръгове на интеграция; интеграционни кръгове.	
À la carte	À la carte; Европа по меню	
Future of Europe	Бъдещето на Европа; бъдещето на Европейския съюз; бъдещето на европейския проект	Other key words (future of the EU; Future of the European project) were used for this search.
DI mechanisms		
Enhanced cooperation	Засилено сътрудничество; тясно сътрудничество	The term ‘Close cooperation’ was also explored
opt-out	Неучастие; право на неучастие	Several combinations of key words (non-participation; right not to participate) were used for this search, with no results
DI instances - Enhanced cooperation		
Pesco	Постоянно структурирано сътрудничество/ПЕСКО/пакт за обща отбрана	Several combinations of key words were used for this search
Rome III	Регламент „Рим III“ Регламент (ЕС) № 1259/2010 на Съвета от 20 декември 2010 относно осъществяването на	Several combinations of key words were used for this search, with no results.

	засилено сътрудничество в областта на приложимото право при развод и законна раздяла	
Unitary Patent	Единен патент; европейски патент; единна патентна система	Several combinations of key words (European patent; unitary patent system) were used for this search
Matrimonial property regimes	Съпружески имуществен режим	No matches
Financial Transaction Tax	Данък върху финансовите транзакции	
European Public Prosecutor	Европейски прокурор; Европейска прокуратура	
DI instances - Opt-out policy fields		
Schengen	Шенген	Other key words: space, criteria, requirements, agreement, visa
Economic and Monetary Union	(ИВС, ИРМ 2, еврозона)	Other key words: IRM II, eurozone
Security and Defence Policy	Обща политика за отбрана и сигурност; ОПОС	
Area of freedom, security, and justice	Пространство за свобода сигурност и правосъдие	
Charter of Fundamental Rights	Харта на основните права	
Social Chapter	(Европейска) Социална харта	
DI instances - Inter se agreements		
Prum Convention	Договор от Прюм	
European Stability Mechanism	Европейски механизъм за стабилност (ЕМС)	
Fiscal Compact	Фискален пакт; пакт за стабилност и растеж; Европ плюс	Other key words: Fiscal pact, Pact for stability and growth, Europlus
Single Resolution Mechanism	Единен механизъм за реструктуриране; Единен фонд за реструктуриране; единен надзорен механизъм	Other key words: Single resolution fund; Single Supervisory Mechanism
Unified Patent Court	Единен патентен съд	
DI instances - external integration		
European Economic Area	Европейско икономическо пространство; ЕИП	
Customs union + Turkey	Митнически съюз + Турция	

Eastern Partnership	Източно партньорство	
Euromed	Евро-средиземноморско партньорство; Процес от Барселона	Other key words: Barcelona process

Appendix 3 Presidents, Prime Ministers and Governments of Bulgaria between 2007 and 2020

Name	Took office	Left office	Political affiliation
1. Georgi Parvanov	22 January 2002 22 January 2007	22 January 2007 22 January 2012	BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) ⁵⁸
2. Rossen Plevneliev	22 January 2012	22 January 2017	No PA, supported by GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria)
3. Ruman Radev	22 January 2017 –		No PA, supported by BSP

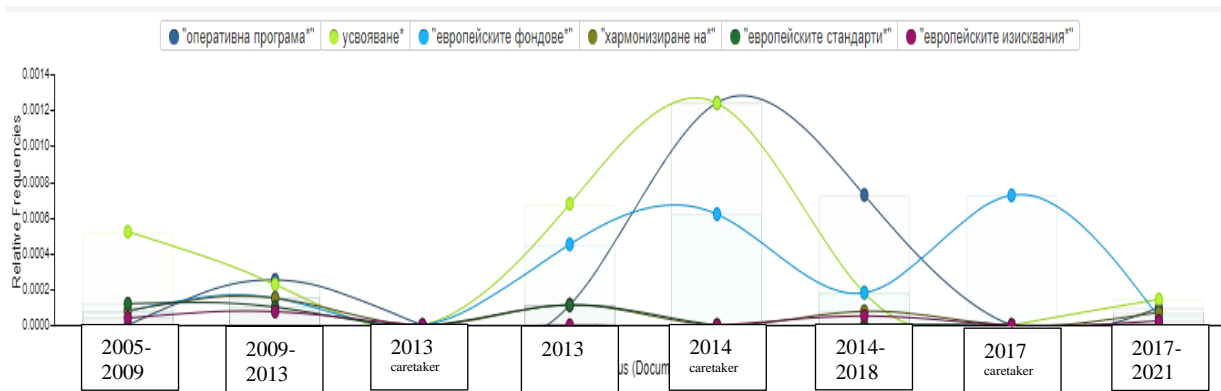
Government	Prime Minister	From	To	Governing party / coalition
1. Stanishev government	Sergei Stanishev	17 August 2005	27 July 2009	Bulgarian Socialist Party, National Movement Simeon II, Movement for Rights and Freedoms
2. First Borisov government	Boyko Borisov	27 July 2009	13 July 2013	GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria) (minority government)
3. Raykov government	Marin Raykov	13 March 2013	29 May 2013	Caretaker government
4. Oresharski government	Plamen Oresharski	29 May 2013	6 August 2014	Bulgarian Socialist Party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms ⁵⁹
5. Bliznashki government	Georgi Bliznashki	6 August 2014	7 November 2014	Caretaker government
6. Second Borisov government	Boyko Borisov	7 November 2014	27 January 2017	GERB, Reformist Bloc, Alternative for Bulgarian Revival
7. Gerdzhikov government	Ognyan Gerdzhikov	27 January 2017	4 May 2017	Caretaker government
8. Third Borisov government	Boyko Borisov	4 May 2017	-	GERB, United Patriots ⁶⁰

⁵⁸ BSP is the successor to the Bulgarian Communist Party

⁵⁹ The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) represents the Turkish ethnic minority in Bulgaria. The country's high proportion of Muslim citizens (due to its historical Ottoman rule) constitutes the core supporters of the party.

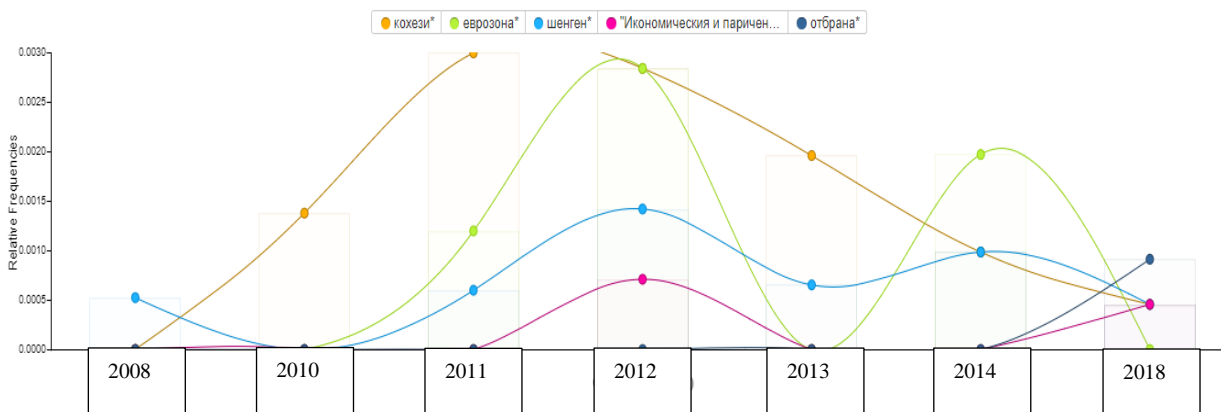
⁶⁰ The far-right nationalistic coalition of United Patriots includes political parties such as Ataka, VMRO and the National front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB).

Appendix 4 Salience of other instances of EU-related issues in government programmes



English translation of search items from left to the right: Operational programme; absorption; European funds; harmonisation of; European standards; European requirements

Appendix 5 Salience of DI Models, Mechanisms and Instances in EU Councils Statements



English translation of search items from left to the right: Cohesion*; eurozone; Schengen; EMU; defence

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