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**The Development and Interaction of Political Parties and Civil**

**Associations in Post-Communist Bulgaria and Romania**

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## 1.INTRODUCTION

The Central and Eastern Europe was for many years the “black sheep” for Europe. It is the region that managed to join the EU, the Western organization, after being for almost forty years part of the eastern block under communism. Common elements can be detected in all CEE countries, but the development after the 1989 change of regimes was not the same. Two of them, Bulgaria and Romania, followed a slower path on their way to consolidation and to EU. What these countries have in common, apart from the regime change, the economic crisis in 1996 and the accession to NATO in 2004 and EU in 2007, is that the real change came later than 1989.

In 1996 Romanian people voted for a change and the former opposition came to power for the first time in post-communist Romania, making one of the greatest electoral surprises of 1996 (Craiutu, 2000). In Bulgaria, the Government of Kostov of the 1997 elections was the first in the history of post-totalitarian Bulgaria to complete its full mandate of four years, as provided by the Constitution (Crampton, 2008). Although the results were the same, the history of it's one is sui genesis.

### 1.1 Bulgaria

Bulgaria, bounded by the Black Sea to the East, the Danube to the North and mountains along its frontiers with Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is extended to an area of 111,000 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 8.3 million. The first Bulgarian state goes back to 681. It was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1396 until 1908 when gained its independence and had a constitutional monarchy. In 1946 a People's Republic was declared and the Communist Party ruled until November 1989, when the communist rule collapsed and gave its rise to the Republic of Bulgaria (Commission of the European Communities, 1997).

Bulgaria became the first of the former satellite countries to adopt an entirely new non-communist constitution in June 1991 (Drezov, 2000). Since July 1991 Bulgaria has been a parliamentary republic with the Constitution being the supreme law of the country without any other law's ability to contravene it (Council of Ministers of Republic of Bulgaria, 2005). The National Assembly is a one-chamber

parliament, which is consisted by 240 Members of Parliament who are directly elected every four years. It is a permanent acting body directed by a board of Chairmen, including the Chairman of the National Assembly (Council of Ministers of Republic of Bulgaria, 2005). The Grand National Assembly consists of 400 members, is elected by the generally established procedure. It alone is empowered to adopt a new constitution, to sanction territorial changes to the Republic of Bulgaria, to resolve on any changes in the form of state structure or form of government, and to enact amendments to certain parts of the existing Constitution (Crampton, 2008).

The head of the state is the President, who embodies the unity of the nation and represents the Republic of Bulgaria in international relations. The Council of Ministers is the executive state body that directs the domestic and foreign policy of the country (Council of Ministers of Republic of Bulgaria, 2005).

## 2.2 Romania

Romania with 237 500 km<sup>2</sup> and population 22.6 million is between the Black Sea and Danube delta to the south-east and is crossed by the Carpathian Mountains to the north-west, which also form a north-south barrier across the country. Romania gained its independence from Ottoman Empire and became a state with the union of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859. In 1947 Romania was under the rule of the Communist Party. In 1965 Nicolae Ceausescu became President and in late 1989 a revolt within the party and popular uprising led to his removal and execution, as well as his wife's execution, in December of that year (Commission of the European Communities, 1997).

The National Salvation Front took power after the fall of Ceausescu and made changes to the Constitution of 1965 beginning with the name of the country from Socialist Republic of Romania to Romania. The single political party system was abolished and a democratic and pluralist system of government was introduced. The new Constitution based on the Constitution of France's Fifth Republic was approved in a national referendum in 1991. Seventy-nine amendments to the Constitution were approved by a plebiscite in 2003 in order to come closer to the EU legislation (Gallagher, 2008).

Romania is governed on the basis of multi-party democratic system and of separation of powers. Romania's legislature, whose term is four years, consists of the

Camera Deputatilor (Chamber of Deputies-lower house) and Senatul (The Senate-upper house). President is elected by universal, free, direct and secret vote, for a maximum of two terms of five years. The elected President may not remain a member of any political party and is responsible to appoint the PM who in turn appoints the Council of Ministers. The number of Deputies and Senators is established under the electoral law in proportion to Romania's overall population (Gallagher, 2008).

### 1.3 Civil society

Civil society can be defined as the realm of "all social groups that are or can be understood as voluntary and no coercive, thus excepting only the family whose members are not volunteers, and the state, which, even if its legitimacy rests on the consent of its members, wields coercive power over them"(Muntean & Gheorghita, 2005). It involves religious organizations and political interest groups unorganized as parties, civil rights NGOs, trade unions, that do not intend to rise to political office, but to influence the political system and the policy making, to give directions, to demand policy measures and to communicate with the state institutions and all for the common interest (Muntean & Gheorghita, 2005).

## 2. AIMS OF PRESENT STUDY

The aim of this paper is to examine the development of the political parties and associations in post- communist Bulgaria and Romania. It deals with the political parties of these two countries, the changes that occurred in leaderships, the splits and coalitions since 1989. Moreover, it will be presented their programs and the relationship among them. Further purpose of this paper is to compare the two countries in the field of their party system.

In regard to the associations, the paper examines the civil society in Bulgaria and Romania through civic associations, including trade unions and NGOs. The communist rule destroyed the sense of civil society and it took time to both countries to mobilize the society. Another aim of this part is to examine if there is a development or not of civil society and to explain the reasons for it. Part of the paper lists and describes the associations, from cultural, employer's to environmental and women's associations and to compare the two countries.

## 2.1 Methodology

In order to reach conclusions the paper uses secondary data. Material from questionnaires, official web sites and interviews will also be used.

## 2.2 Structure of the paper

The analysis proceeds in five chapters. The first chapter briefly mentions the history of post-communist Bulgaria and Romania and the term of civil society. In the second chapter presents the aims of the study and the methodology that was used in order to reach conclusions. The third chapter divided in three parts, examines the development and interaction of the political parties. The first section deals with the case of Bulgaria, while the second part deals with the political parties in Romania. The third one compares the two countries. The fourth chapter has three parts, describing the associations. The first part refers to Bulgarian associations, the second to Romanian associations and the next one is a comparison. The final chapter draws together the findings in order to reach conclusions about two important elements of democracy; the political parties and the civil society in Bulgaria and Romania.

### 3. Development and interaction of political parties

#### 3.1 Case of Bulgaria

The change of the communist regime caused the political dilemma of reform communism versus liberal democracy (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). The party system in Bulgaria found itself with two blocs struggling for power, the communist and the reformist and many coalitions and electoral alliances that were formed, broke up and were revived on a fairly frequent basis (Siaroff 2000). The first bloc included the Communist Party that changed its name to Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in 1990 and the second one was represented by the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), a coalition of different parties. However, none of them was heterogeneous in its formation and its policy of reforms (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot, 2004).

In the communist camp both were the supporters of reform and the neo-communists. The former was also divided into a radical and a moderate wing. The first asking for a democratic change and a break with the past and the later asking for the preservation of the party on power (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

The Union of Democratic Forces was created by “historical” parties, former dissidents, who were also former members of the Communist Party, and lastly by newly created parties<sup>1</sup>. All of them were united under the same goal, to remove the former communists from power (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

Although all the internal differences were put aside in the name of the anti-communism, UDF failed to speak with one voice and its campaign for shock therapy in economy gave to the BSP the opportunity to win the 1990 elections. The BSP presented itself as the savior, the one that brought down Zhivko’s regime. It promised a gradual transition to a market economy and a coalition with the opposition either before or after the elections. It wanted to be presented as a new, modern left-socialist party (Bell 1997).

UDF’s unity lasted only one year as before the 1991 elections the party saw its first splits. The largest coalition partners, the Social Democratic Party, the Agrarian Union and some smaller withdraw when they were refused a more prominent voice in

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<sup>1</sup> the Social Democratic, the Bulgarian Agrarian Peoples Party “Nikola Petkov”, the Democratic Party, the Radical- Democratic Party, the Ecoglasnost movement, the Club for Glasnost and Democracy, the Podkrepa trade union, the Republican Party and the Christian Democratic Party

the UDF Council or a greater number of candidates on the UDF electoral list and run independently as UDF-Center (Bugajski, 2002). Moreover, the BANU-NP ran independently and others left to form "light-blue" UDF-Liberals and what was left formed the UDF-Movement. Splits were found also inside the parties forming the UDF, as fractions of the parties that split off remained in the UDF. In the Ekoglasnost, the chairman left the UDF to form Ekoglasnost Political Club, in the Democracy Clubs the chairman founded a new Club for Liberal Democracy and the old Greens changed their name to the Conservative-Ecological Party as a new independent Green Party was formed (Bell 1997).

Thus in October 1991 elections, the UDF won the BSP by a narrow margin of just over 1 percent of the votes cast. As no party had a clear majority, UDF led by Filip Dimitrov formed a government supported by the only party that pass the 4 percent threshold, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). The BSP had accused the MRF of violating the Article 11 of the Constitution, which forbids the formation of an ethnic party, in order not to run in the elections but the Constitutional Court decided that the MRF had legal status (Roger 2002).

At the end of October the MRF withdrew its support and allied with its former enemy, the BSP, to bring down the government that itself brought into power. The social unrest, the economic hardship and the failure of the UDF to stand up the demands of the MRF and its voters for a change led to a vote of no confidence. 121 votes to 111 made the government to resign and when UDF refused to form a coalition government under the MRF, the latter with the BSP formed a government under the BSP Lyuben Berov (Roger 2002).

The instability continued, the MRF Members of Parliament (MPs) were once again dissatisfied and demonstrations in Sofia against the government for economic policies, corruption and clandestine business interests forced Berov to resignation. It was replaced by a caretaker administration under Reneta Indzhova (Bugajski, 2002). The BSP ran a leftist coalition, the Democratic Left, in the 1994 elections and returned to power with its leader Zhan Videnov as prime minister.

These elections were a defeat for the opposition UDF and its radical decommunization and Ivan Kostov replaced Filip Dimitrov in the leadership. His plan was to improve relations with the MRF and the People's Union. The elections also paved the way to new political formations in parliament, the Bulgarian Business Bloc



BBB and the People's Union (a coalition between BANU and the Democratic Party, a split of the UDF coalition) (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

As the UDF was blamed for the situation in the country, people expected from BSP to stabilize the economic situation. The BSP soon lost its support and the slow progress of reforms and the mishandling of the economy led to a financial and social crisis in 1996-1997 (Bugajski, 2002). Videnov unexpectedly resigned from the office of Prime Minister and the post of party leader. The Minister of the Interior, Nikolai Dobrev, replaced him as Prime Minister (Roger 2002).

Pressure was tough and rallies started again in Bulgaria. Unable the government resigned after a no confidence vote and announced elections in 1997. The Presidential elections a year ago prepared the 1997 general election results. The UDF presidential candidate Petar Stoyanov gained an overwhelming percentage to the Socialist Ivan Marazov (Bugajski, 2002). Parliamentary elections were held on 19 April 1997. Those elections found the three major parties running into coalitions.

The UDF ran as member of the coalition United Democratic Forces (with the People's Union) led by Kostov; a pro-democratic, anti-communist, committed to fast market reform and pro-Western in orientation coalition (Siaroff 2000). The BSP with the Democratic Left in coalition with Ecoglasnost Political Club and the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union - Alexander Stambolijnski (Siaroff 2000). The MRF formed the "Union for National Salvation" with the Green Party and the Union New Choice (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

The United Democratic Forced gained the majority of votes and Ivan Kostov formed a government. This government was the first in the post-communist history of Bulgaria to govern its full mandate (Crampton, 2008). However it was the last time for it to be on power. The results of the next programmed elections in 2001 showed the decline of the UDF. "People were so disappointed that were saying that it totally destroyed the country. It used the privatisation process for itself and "stole" the country's money" (anonymous interview, Haskovo, 11/08/09).

If the 1997 elections marked the beginning of the change, then the 2001 elections paved the way to what the party system is today. It was the first time that a new, powerful party appeared to break the bipolar party system of the BSP and the UDF; it was the formation of the National Movement Simeon II (NMSS)(Crampton 2007). Ex-king Simeon II Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the former Tsar of Bulgaria, came out of nowhere (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004) to rule the country. His participation

was controversial. The Sofia City Court denied its registration as a political party, arguing that the movement failed to meet several criteria laid down in the Law on Political Parties and in the Law on Legal Entities with Non-Profit Aims (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2001a).

His party ran in a coalition under the name Coalition National Movement “Simeon II” with the parties Movement "Oborishte" and the Bulgarian Women's Party (Novinite.com b). Aside to this, two more groups used the name of the ex-king, the Coalition “Simeon II” and the Coalition “National Alliance for Tsar Simeon II”, the former received 3.44% and the latter 1.70% (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2001a).

Once again the parties ran in coalitions in elections; The ruling United Democratic Forces coalition; Coalition for Bulgaria by the BSP with other leftist groups; the Coalition Movement for Rights and Freedoms by MRF, the Liberal Union, and “Euroroma”(a Roma party); the Bulgarian Euro-Left and its two coalition partners, the Bulgarian Unified Social Democratic Party and the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union; the Gergyovden-Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization coalition and the Coalition National Movement “Simeon II” (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2001a).

The NMSS won the elections and Simeon was the first exiled king to become a prime minister (The New York Times a). Two members of the MRF and the BSP participated in the NMSS cabinet (Crampton 2007).

Its NMSS victory has many reasons, from the idea that it was just the circumstances to king’s personality. The NMSS had benefited from the weakness of its opponents (Crampton 2007) and their corrupt scandals, the high unemployment due to factory closures and the relatively low standard of living because of the drastic cuts in education and health care. Reforms by the BSP and the UDF due to the European Union’s target, caused discontent and hatred in the Bulgarian people (World Socialist Web Site b).

The new movement brought expectations and hopes which the former Tsar exploited in his campaign. He was a Western, with connections abroad that hadn’t been involved in scandals and hoped to be incorrupt due to his personal wealth (Crampton 2007). Moreover, his movement entailed parliamentarians without any political experience, young Western educated economists, established lawyers and

intellectuals that were also believed to be incorrupt (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

He claimed to change Bulgarians' lives within 800 days in office, to fight corruption and to stimulate business and entrepreneurship. He promised to move towards the EU and the NATO and to make Bulgaria able to attract foreign investment "This home will be beautiful and wonderful... The Bulgarian people are capable of marvels...", "Believe me!" were some of the populist expressions he used (World Socialist Web Site b).

The 2001 elections brought changes to the main parties in Bulgaria. The UDF entered a period of internal crisis and Nadeshda Mihaiolowa replaced the ex-prime minister and party leader Ivan Kostov. On the other hand, the BSP became stronger as its presidential candidate, Georgi Parvanov, won the elections and it was transformed to a social democratic party. The ethnic Turkish MRF became a governing party for the first time (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). It is important to notice the role of the MRF in the Bulgarian politics and the formation of governments. It shows a more democratically mature political system and a peaceful and constructive resolution of the ethnic tensions (Karasimeonov 1999).

The results of the 2005 elections revealed the "success" of the NMSS. It had managed to fulfill only the promises for the NATO and the EU by signing the agreements as it failed domestically. Problems of corruption, unemployment, crime, pensioner poverty and demographic decline let people down (Crampton 2007). Its votes were reduced dramatically from 42.7percent to 19.9 percent. Another important element in the 2005 elections is the position of the parties in the Roma representation issue. The BSP allied with the party Roma and created a specific platform on Roma-related issues and the UDF included the Roma party Equal Rights Societal Model (DROM) in its pre-election coalition in order to attract votes and ensure the four percent threshold (Voynova & National Democratic Institute 2006).

At the general elections of 25 June 2005, the Coalition of Bulgaria led by BSP under Stanishev received the greatest number of votes cast followed by the NMSII, the MRF and the new far rightist party, the Attack National Union. Another party appeared in these elections, the Democrats for Strong Bulgaria led by Kostov, when he and other members left the UDF. After strong talks and failure attempts, the BSP Coalition formed a coalition government with the MRF and the NMSS (Voynova & National Democratic Institute 2006).

The winners were the BSP-led Coalition for Bulgaria and the MRF, as they doubled their seats in parliament and the losers were the NMSS that scored half of the 2001 parliamentary vote and the center-right party UDF which had the lowest vote in the post-communist history (Voynova & National Democratic Institute 2006).

A further element of the 2005 elections is the rise of a nationalist party, the Attack coalition. It started gaining support few weeks before the elections, but managed to be the fourth strongest power in parliament. It is a coalition of the National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland, the Bulgarian National Patriotic Party and the Union of Patriotic Forces and Militaries of the Reserve (Voynova & National Democratic Institute 2006).

Its slogan "Let's Give Bulgaria Back to the Bulgarians," made it clear that it is a nationalist and anti-minority party. The Bulgarian nation is above all according to its program documents, the 20 Principles and the Program Scheme. Akata attacks the Turks and Roma in Bulgaria and even talks for change of names and work camps. However, it received Roma votes that it could be explained only by the lack of information and voter confusion in the Roma community (Voynova & National Democratic Institute 2006).

The year before the latest 2009 elections found all parties in an election campaign strategy. The governing coalition suffered transformations, splits and no-confidence votes, but managed to work its full mandate. Moreover, the parties themselves suffered internal splits and transformations starting with the National Movement Simeon II, which changed its name to National Movement for Stability and Progress while Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was re-elected leader (Karasimeonov 2008c).

The party remained loyal member and partner to the tri-partite coalition until the 2009 elections and declared, "What a country needed at a time of crisis was political stability" (Karasimeonov 2009). However, it had its own image as a political formation and criticized its partners when it was necessary. Its campaign emphasized "the economic stability of the country, the sustainable economic growth, the modernization of the pension system, the healthcare reform, the liberalization of the energy sector, the combat against monopolies and cartels (Karasimeonov 2008c).

The NMSP was tested when a group of 17 MPs left the parliamentary faction and established their own named Bulgarian New Democracy (BND). The ex Minister of Defense in the Cabinet of Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Nickolay Svinarov, was

elected leader of the new party, and his deputies became MPs Lydia Shuleva, Borislav Velikov, and Christo Savchev. The BND claimed to be right centrist orientated seeking cooperation with the other rightwing parties. Former officers and collaborators of the secret services of the communist regime could not be elected in leadership posts in the party (Karasimeonov 2008b).

The BND supported the parliamentary non-confidence vote against the tripartite governing coalition. Although it asked membership in the European People's Party, it failed to be considered as a right wing party and to convince the electorate that it truly belonged to the opposition, as it was part of the governing coalition only a year ago. Certain right-wing political parties used its past to refuse BND in right-wing election coalition (Karasimeonov 2009).

The leading party had its own difficulties inside its coalition. The leader of the Political Movement Social Democrats left the coalition and became independent MP (Karasimeonov 2008a). Moreover the party and the governing coalition was hit by a scandal when one of the major institutions of state, the Ministry of Interior and the top levels of the political and professional leadership of the ministry, the Minister of Interior, Roumen Petkov, were accused for connections with organized crime (Karasimeonov 2008b). Although the NMSP stood for the governing coalition, it decided to emancipate from the coalition due to the elections and categorically declared to stand for Roumen Petkov's resignation and abstained during the last non-confidence vote against the government (Karasimeonov 2008b).

As far as the third part of the governing coalition is concerned, the MRF, it was strongly attacked, mostly by the Democrats for Strong Bulgaria (DSB) and the citizens for European Development of Bulgaria Party (GERB), a party established in 2006 by former mayor of Sofia, Boyko Borissov. The DSB addressed the MRF to the Prosecutor's office, the new National Security Agency and the Parliamentary Committee for Combat against Corruption with the request to check the source of the funds, with which the massive and luxurious residence of the MRF leader, Ahmed Dogan, has been acquired, in one of the elite neighborhoods of Sofia (Karasimeonov 2008b).

MRF supported the unity of the tripartite government even in the crisis at the Ministry of Interior, as it wanted to continue its cooperation with the BSP for the 2009 elections, an idea supported by the BSP too (Karasimeonov 2008b). Another scandal kept the MRF in the target when the Secretary of the MRF Political Cabinet, Ahmed

Emin suicide in the personal residence of the party leader, Ahmed Dogan (Karasimeonov 2008c).

The opposition tried to hit the government coalition with no confidence votes mostly for attracting public attention, rather than to bring it down (Karasimeonov 2009). The UDF leadership declared that it was open to any rightwing party in order to unify the right parties. It appealed to the Union of Free Democrats, to the Bulgarian Democratic Forum, to the Union of Victims of Communist Reprisals, the Radical-Democratic Party and to Kostov's party the DSB, and the GERB (Karasimeonov 2008a).

DSB had its differences and internal critics as its leader was accused to isolate the party. DSB was always in the public eye as it was the party exposing scandals. Its member revealed the recordings, which brought about the resignation of the Minister of Interior, Roumen Petkov, and the investigation started by the Prosecutor's Office (Karasimeonov 2008b).

Kostov tried to reproach the UDF but he was saying that their cooperation was problematic due to relations between the UDF and the MRF (Karasimeonov 2008b). In addition circles in the UDF blocked the unification with the DSB because "they did not want people responsible for the split of the UDF to be present on the party slates", mainly Kostov. When the UDF leadership was given to Martin Dimitrov, the National Council approved the coalition with DSB and an agreement was signed. The two parties ran together in 2009 in the European Parliament and the general elections. Their campaign was focused on corruption, organized crime and judicial reform. Members left the DSB parliamentary faction and became independent Members of Parliament (Karasimeonov 2009).

The most important player the last years has been the GERB. All opposition parties, even Ataka, wanted to be its ally for the elections, although its leader declared that he wished for a majority and did not want to govern in coalition (Karasimeonov 2009). If it was necessary, the party would cooperate only with rightist parties and Borissov declared that he would never form a government neither with the MRF nor the BSP and even put his signature under his statement in public in order not to take back his declaration (Karasimeonov 2008b).

The DSB was asking Borissov to differentiate itself from President Parvanov, as he was also a part of the this tri-partite governing, and from all collaborators and officers belonging the former State Security services who were listed as GERB's

candidates on its party slates in 2007 local elections in order to work with it (Karasimeonov 2008b).

GERB was gaining popularity because of the confidence crisis and its accession to the European People's Party since it was internationally recognized as a right-wing political party. Only Kostov's DSB refrained from voting in favor of its membership with the excuse that it "had not proven yet its right-centrist essence" (Karasimeonov 2008a). Borissov showed its nationalist ideas and confronted with the MRF when in a TV program said that "it was not the objectives of the Revival Process<sup>2</sup> that were wrong, what was wrong were the methods employed to achieve these objectives". The MRF asked the European People's Party for an official stance and opinion (Karasimeonov 2008c).

Changes occurred also in the Ataka front as the elections were coming. Its leader Siderov, tried to break party's isolation by opening to other parties and softening his tone (Karasimeonov 2008b). Thus it continued its nationalist platform by asking the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia to give back the territories once inhabited by Bulgarians to the Republic of Bulgaria in order not to veto their accession to the EU. This declaration was a counterbalance to the threat of the GERB (Karasimeonov 2008c).

The recent 2009 elections brought to power the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria party. The Socialists ran as Coalition for Bulgaria were defeated and accused for its economic policy during the global economic crisis and the frozen funds from the European Union (The New York Times b). The MRF came third and the Ataka party fourth, followed by the Blue Coalition of the UDF and the DSB. The newly formed Order, Lawfulness, Justice party also entered the parliament (SETimes.com b, 2009).

The NMSP's leader and founder Simeon left the party. Critics say that he "stole" Bulgarians money after taking back the royal heritage during his ruling years. People are disappointed as "the money he got belongs to the Bulgarian people and no government for the next 15-20 years can make such profit as the king's money"(interview, Haskovo).

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<sup>2</sup> Slavic assimilation campaign undertaken by the Bulgarian Communist Party, asking the Turks to forcefully change their names to Bulgarian names (Karasimeonov 2008c).

Borissov first declarations were: “Those who have stolen should be very afraid... The thieves will go to jail” (SETimes.com b, 2009), “I vote for a European Bulgaria, which has to prove that it is not the poorest and most corrupt country in Europe” (The New York Times b). He formed a minority government as the Blue Coalition and the conservative Order, Law, Justice Party refused to sign a memorandum to support the minority government (SETimes.com a, 2009). Borissov formed the second minority government after the Dimitrov cabinet. Ataka party also supported the GERB government. Bulgaria's parliament approved the center-right government of Boyko Borisov, voting 162-78. The MRF and the BSP voted against the cabinet (Novinite.com a)

#### Bulgarian Socialist Party( BSP), Balgarska Socialisticeska Partija

It is the successor of the Bulgarian Communist Party that ruled the country from 1944 until 1989 (Bugajski, 2002). After the fall of communism the BCP renamed itself to Bulgarian Socialist Party and adopted the democratic socialism (Novinite.com b).

According to its program the “BSP is a parliamentary and a mass party that works...to build a democratic and humane society on the basis of universal, national and socialist values”. Its symbols are the scarlet red flag with white letters “BSP”, a red rose with green leaves on a white background and the red petolachka, historical symbol of struggle and sacrifices made by the party. According to its memorandum its basic values are freedom, democracy, equality, social justice and solidarity on the basis of which work to build a new European Left in Bulgaria. It wants to protect the interests of working people, people from these social strata and groups who strive for democracy and social justice. (BSP, 2008)

BSP defends state structure based on the republican form of government, defends national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. BSP shall “contribute to the development of civil society structures, the expression of political demands of citizens, while respecting the principles of democracy, political pluralism and the separation of government, work to create equal relationships between people, society and state”. BSP recognizes the right to freedom of religion, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic identity of the Bulgarian citizens belonging to ethnic groups opposed to the manifestations of extremism, chauvinism, ethnic and territorial separatism”. (BSP 2008)



It is member of the Socialist International since 2003, member of the Party of European Socialists (PES) since 2005 and member of the PES Group in the European Parliament since 2007 (Novinite.com b).

Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) Sajuz na Demokratichni Sili (SDS)

The Union of Democratic Forces was created as a formation of various dissident groups and traditional, restored parties on 12 December 1989 as opposition to the Bulgarian Communist Party. Prominent Bulgarian intellectuals, long-standing activists of political parties and many young people were members of this formation (UDFb).

In 2004 UDF split when former leader Kostov and a group of his supporters founded a new party, the Democrats for Strong Bulgaria (DSB) and Stefan Sofianski, Mayor of Sofia, left the UDF to establish a new party. In June 2005 elections, the UDF remained fifth and the leaders Nadezhda Mihailova and former President Stoyanov resigned and were replaced by the elected businessman Plamen Yurukov (UDFb). He also resigned at the end of 2008, and MP Martin Dimitrov was elected the new Chairman. The UDF and DSB formed the so-called Blue Coalition together with an agrarian, a social democrat and a radical democrat party (Novinite.com b). The Blue Coalition's target is the economic crisis, Bulgaria's access to EU money, the elimination of political corruption, energy security and improvements in transport infrastructure, education, and health care. It supports Turkey's membership in the EU if "Turkey meets all of the Copenhagen Criteria, and stops interfering in Bulgaria's domestic affairs" (Novinite.com b).

The UDF is a conservative, Christian democratic, right-wing and pro-western party (Novinite.com b). According to its memorandum UDF "our objective has always been and will always be to achieve sustainable, secure, democratic, free and just life for the Bulgarian citizens and for our country among the European nations. Only developed nations will have a well-deserved place in a united Europe. The economic progress is a condition not only for a more satisfactory present but also for our future". UDF claims that Bulgaria needs to move right to a competitive market economy, to an effective judicial system and transparent government (UDFa).

UDF is a member of the European People's Party (EPP), of the Centrist Democrat International (CDI) and International Democrat Union (IDU) (Parties and elections in Europe, 2009).

#### Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB),Grazdani za Evropejsko Razvitie na Balgaria

Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria is the ruling party nowadays in Bulgaria, created in the spring 2006 by Boyko Borisov, the later mayor of the capital Sofia, also Chief Secretary of Bulgaria's Interior Ministry during Simeon Saxe-Coburg government. A close associate had the party chair, Tzvetan Tzvetanov, as Borissov was not allowed to be a chairman during his term as mayor (Novinite.com b).

According to its program GERB “seeks to shape the political will of citizens to promote democratic freedoms and social security”. Its basic principles are “the civil liberties; europeanization; opportunities; prosperity”. The party promotes “democratic freedoms and social responsibility; contacts between the national and international organizations on the basis of European integration of Bulgaria; spiritual, moral and cultural values of the Bulgarians; equal opportunities for all citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria, regardless of gender, age, religion; standard of living; trust of society towards the state institutions and corruption; institutional strengthening of public authorities; activity of state structures for the effective implementation of European practices; role of civil society in the management of the state” (GERB, 2009).

Its sign is GERB written in white letters with a blue outline with 13 gray stars, The flag is gray with a rectangular shape with the center depicts character and the seal is round, with a sign displayed in the center GERB, 2009). Since 2008 the GERB belongs to the EPP (Parties and elections in Europe, 2009).

#### Attack, Ataka

Ataka was set up in 2005 and it is a populist, nationalist and even could be said far rightist party. The chairman is Volen Siderov, a former journalist and popular

TV host. It did take part in the Parliamentary elections in 2005 as the National Union "Ataka", formed by "Ataka", the National Movement for the Salvation of the Fatherland, the Bulgarian National Patriotic Party, the Union of Patriotic Forces and Reservist Officers<sup>3</sup> ( Novinite.com b).

In its document "20 Principles", Ataka presents its position. For Ataka the country and its citizens come first above everything else: "Bulgaria is mononational and integrated country that can not be a subject of division according to any of the following principles: religion, ethnos, and culture. The difference in origin or confession cannot dominate over the national identity. Those who neglect these principles separate themselves from the Bulgarian nation and country and don't have the right to make any further claims to the State" (ATAKA, 2004-2008).

In its declaration it states that the first priority for the State is "health, social security, education, spiritual and material prosperity of Bulgarian nation. These listed above stay on top of all political, military and other international unions". It asks for the "prohibition and clear legal sanctions for ethnic parties and separatist organizations". It demands the Bulgarian land to belong only to Bulgarians and the only spoken language to be Bulgarian (ATAKA, 2004-2008).

In foreign policy, Ataka was against the war in Iraq and wants Bulgaria to leave NATO but it is in favor of the EU. In accordance to the principles, Ataka is against the MRF, which it characterized as corrupt and a danger of "Islamization" of Europe (ATAKA, 2004-2008).

Ataka's slogan is "Let's bring Bulgaria back to Bulgarians"( ATAKA, 2004-2008) and for the 2009 European "No to Turkey in EU" (Novinite.com b).

#### Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), Dvizenie za Prava I Svobodi (DPS)

In 1990 it was created in Varna the successor formation to the Turkish National Liberation Movement of the 1980s. The leader of the new party called Movement for Rights and Freedoms was Ahmet Dogan, a Turkish activist during the communist era. Its first demands were "the minority rights of freedom of the original

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<sup>3</sup> The coalition was created because Ataka's registration as a political party in court was delayed, and it could not run in the elections ( Novinite.com b).

name, freedom of language and religion and amnesty for political prisoners and the right to emigrate to Turkey”. The platform of the party later included “civic rights and rights for all minorities; membership to all ethnic groups; the economic problems among minorities; and the strengthening of the role of the MRF” (Bugajski, 2002).

It could not run as an ethnic party representing the Turkish minority, as the BSP and the UDF had agreed that parties of ethnic or religious lines would not be registered. So, the MRF announced that it had no separatist purpose and was open to the Bulgarian Muslim and other minorities (Bugajski, 2002). It claims to “oppose any manifestation of national chauvinism, revenge, Islamic fundamentalism and religious fanaticism” (MRF, 2006). The MRF was registered by the Sofia court as a multi-ethnic party, although some Bulgarian nationalists protested (Bugajski, 2002). Thus in 1991 MPs asked the Constitutional Court to declare the MRF unconstitutional but the Court rejected the petition (Novinite.com b).

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms claims to “be a centrist, liberal political party, and an all-national party” (MRF, 2006). MRF is a member of the Liberal International since 2002, it belongs to the European Liberal, Democrat and Reformist Party( ELDR) (MRF, 2006) and it is member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group in the European Parliament since 2007 (Novinite.com b).

According to its platform it “aims to contribute to the unity of the Bulgarian people and to the full and unequivocal compliance with the rights and freedoms of mankind and of all religious and cultural communities in Bulgaria”. However, it asked the “preservation of culture and educational traditions through the restoration of newspapers, magazines and radio stations using the Turkish language” (MRF, 2006).

#### National Movement for Stability and Progress (NMSP), Nacionalno Dvizenie za Stabilnost i Vazhod (NDSV)

In 2001 the exiled former Tsar of Bulgaria Simeon II Saxe-Coburg came back to Bulgaria from Spain, to enter the Bulgarian politics (Novinite.com b). Himself said he had no intention of bringing back monarchy and that even sometimes “ I regret I was not born Simeon Borisov, not Simeon II, son of Boris III. I am a citizen of, and obey the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria” ( Kadiev, 2001). He formed the National Movement "Simeon the Second" (NMSS) and ran in the 2001 elections in a coalition

under the name Coalition National Movement “Simeon II” with the parties Movement "Oborishte" and the Bulgarian Women's Party (Novinite.com b) because the Sofia City Court denied registration as a political party. It claimed that failed to meet several criteria laid down in the Law on Political Parties and in the Law on Legal Entities with Non-Profit Aims and the there was not used the word “party”, which it obligatory by law (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2001a).

Although the former Tsar did not run as a candidate in the elections he was asked to form a coalition government with MRF and the support of BSP<sup>4</sup>, “thus becoming the first Eastern European monarch to return from exile and attain a top political position” (Novinite.com b).

He ran with an ambitious program prepared by economists (Kadiev, 2001). According to its pre election campaign the party would fight “against corruption<sup>5</sup>; for fast and transparent privatization; changes in Penal Code; high technologies, energy, agriculture, and tourism sectors; power to local government and financial decentralization of municipalities; increase in salaries, pensions, social aid, and money given by the state for children's support; stimulation of job creation in high unemployment areas; state participation in financing of hospitals; free choice of hospital; protection of children's rights and ecological changes”(The Sofia Echo, 2001).

In 2007 it changed its name to National Movement for Stability and Progress. It defines itself as a center, liberal and centrist formation although initially applied for membership with the European People's Party (EPP), but it was rejected by the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). It became full member of the Liberal International in 2005 and member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group in the European Parliament (Novinite.com b). Its goal is “a modern, competitive, and wealthy Bulgaria” and the development of Bulgarian business, people’s enterprising, free competition, and modern institutions” (NMSS, 2001-2009).

Its motto is “Wealth for the people of Bulgaria” achieved through “dialogue, partnership, pragmatism, moderation, representative democracy and transparent governance on all levels (NMSS, 2001-2009).

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<sup>4</sup> He claimed that he preferred a coalition government because “One-party governments, I believe, do not work well in young democracies. The more parties that participate and assume the political responsibility, the better” (Kadiev,2001)

<sup>5</sup> as the leader said “I would love to have transparency” (Kadiev,2001)

In recent parliamentary elections it failed to get any MPs as it scored only 3 percent of the vote and the leader and founder king Simeon resigned and left the party.

The NMSP got its own internal disputes, starting in 2004 when 11 MPs left the party and formed a new party called "The New Time" and in 2007 17 MPs left the party, expelled or left at their own will; They formed the "Bulgarian New Democracy" (BND) and Nickolay Svinarov, the ex Minister of Defense in the Cabinet of Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was elected leader of the new party (Novinite.com b). The BND declares to be a center-right party and stated that its goal is the elimination of hatred and discrimination in the country (Novinite.com b).

#### Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (DSB) Demokrati za Silna Balgarija

UDF's former Chairman Ivan Kostov with others, among them Yordan Sokolov (the Chairman of the 38th National Assembly UDF), Ekaterina Mihailova (Chairman of the UDF parliamentary group in the 38th National Assembly) and Assen Agov, left the UDF and created a new right wing, conservative party (UDFb). Although a new party, "it is the successor of the Bulgarian political right since the age of national revival. Democrats for Strong Bulgaria are descendants of those who stand to put a modern democratic Bulgaria" (DSBc).

The party wants justice, freedom, peace, security and harmony in Bulgarian society. Goals for the DSB are democracy, private property, and market economy, the prosperity of the Western organization and the integration of Bulgaria in them. Those will be achieved through Parliamentary democracy, civil society, strong institutions, rule of law, market competition and defend of the national interest and traditions (DSBb).

Bulgaria "will be strong when it is safe to live, where there are well-educated people, where healthy people live longer and where pension and social security systems ensure decent old age, when built economy is capable of growing in conditions of competition united Europe, where its wealth increased by enrichment of all its citizens" (DSBa). Its slogan is "FOR STRONG BULGARIA IN UNITED EUROPE!" and its symbol is erected flaming torch of navy blue background (DSBb).

Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria ran on its own in 2005 and in coalition with the UDF (DSB is part of the Blue Coalition) in 2009. The DSB included Roma candidates on

its party list in order to counter MRF's strength at attracting minorities. The party declared that ethnic groups should not be represented differently and "do not need special "mediators" to be part of Bulgarian society" (Voynova & National Democratic Institute 2006).

The party is member of the European People's Party (Parties and elections in Europe, 2009).

### 3.2 Case of Romania

The fall of Ceasescu in 1989 was violent, but there was no real change of regime. Ion Iliescu, a former apparatchik, continued the communist tradition as the state and the bureaucracy supported him. His party, the National Salvation Front, the coalition responsible for the uprising, took the power (Gallagher 2008). Although at the beginning the FSN announced that it would be just a caretaker government to start reforms and to hold elections, it soon changed mind and decided to run as well. The public opinion was positive towards the savior party and the leaders thought, correctly, that they could win the elections. However, that decision caused unrest to the opposition that was quickly formed. Historic parties re-emerged such as the National Liberal Party (PNL), the National Peasant-Christian Democratic Party (PNT-CD) and the Social Democratic Party of Romania (PSDR) and new appeared like the Ecological Movement of Romania. Moreover the minorities started creating their own parties and participate in the political arena with most important the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

The opposition accused Iliescu's party for neo-communism and soon demonstrations took part in Bucharest asking the resignation of the FSN. Iliescu mobilized supportive workers, who attacked presumed opponents of the new regime and the demonstrations ended with violence (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). The opposition, unable to act, agreed elections to be held on 20 May 1990. FSN won the majority of the votes contrary to the opposition, which fared poorly (Bugajski 2002). Petre Roman became the Prime Minister of the new government and Ion Iliescu the President.

Opposition talked for unfair elections as the quasi-government (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004) had the advantage of controlling many areas of the country

and even accused it rigging some of the balloting in its favour (Bugajski 2002). Soon the limited reforms affected social groups that “left” the FSN and started supporting the opposition. Once again demonstrations became part of the daily routine (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). Thus, the governing party did not suffer pressure from outside, but also from inside. Iliescu asked the resignation of Roman, appointing him responsible for the situation in the country (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). Theodor Stolojan replaced him and stayed in this post until the 1992 elections (Bugajski 2000).

Roman became the chief representative of the group in the National Salvation Front supporting the reforms and its supporters confronted at the ruling party's congress. Iliescu and his group broke off and the FSN split into two groups; the one led by Iliescu named Democratic National Salvation Front FDSN, and the remained FSN led by Roman called the Democratic Party DP. The new FSN-DP became a non-governing party and moved to conservatism. Under these circumstances the opposition set aside the differences and formed the Democratic Convention (CD)<sup>6</sup> in 1992 (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

However the unity in the DC did not last long. Before the elections the National Liberal Party decided to ran independently and the DAHR left the Convention's electoral agreement so not to hamper the Convention's electoral changes but supported its candidate in the Presidential elections (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

In the 1992 elections Iliescu's party won but formed a minority government in informal alliance “the red quadrangle” with the Greater Romania Party (GRP), the Romanian National Unity Party (PUNR) and the Socialist Labor Party (Strmiska 2001). That cooperation raised questions over the ideology and the commitment to democracy of the FDSN (Siaroff 2000). Nicolae Vacaroiu became the Prime Minister and Iliescu was reelected President of Romania to Emil Constantinescu, the CD candidate (Bugajski 2002).

The CDR secured its position as the largest opposition force exploiting the split in the FSN (Siaroff 2000). The FDSN won after playing with the public fear of rapid change and nostalgia accusing the opposition of being anarchic and dangerous

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<sup>6</sup> The most prominent: the National Liberals, the National Peasant Party- Christian Democrat, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, the Civic Alliance Party (Berglund Ekman & Aarebrot 2004)



(Bugajski 2002). Moreover the opposition was unprofessional in campaign as the Democratic Convention compared Iliescu with Ceausescu. The difference between the two men was obvious and the opposition helped Iliescu by comparing him with his predecessor (Gallagher 2005).

The governing coalition had its own splits in 1995 as the Socialist Labor Party and the ultra-nationalist Greater Romania Party withdrew their support and the extremist, anti-Hungarian Romanian Unity Party was dismissed from the coalition. The situation in the country was disappointing and the incumbent lost the public support. On the opposite, the other camp transformed and increased their popularity (Bugajski 2002).

The election in 1996 took many in surprise (Gallagher 2005), although the local elections had already prepared for the general and presidential vote results. It was a turning point in the Romanian politics as the reformists finally after seven years of the regime change, took the power from the successor of the communist regime (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). The Democratic Convention was the winner and its candidate Constantinescu won the presidential elections.

The FDSN was punished for its policies since 1992 and the united opposition was rewarded for its cooperation. Even the Democratic Party, ran in the coalition Social Democratic Union (USD) with a small party, participated in the government (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). The CDR was also helped by the DAHR's electoral performance, which supported the governing coalition, believing that only this one could protect and help the Hungarian community<sup>7</sup> ( Bugajski 2002). The opposition formed a coalition government under Victor Ciorbea and the NLP-CD was in command (Gallagher 2005).

The CDR with its platform the "Contract with Romania" raised the expectations and hopes of the electoral. It spoke for the right to property; anti-communism; moral probity; honesty. It promised that within a 200-day period the lives of all citizens would be improved. In addition, Constantinescu was mature enough to run the country; he was a trustful familiar figure. As much the CDR was ready at that time, the change was caused due to the FDSN and its failures (Gallagher 2005).

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<sup>7</sup> Iliescu proved to be unable to keep balance in inter-ethnic relations with his statement causing the fear of Hungarians (Gallagher 2005).

The governing was not easy, neither in the coalition nor in the country. When CDR took power, it found a country with international debt, fiscal imbalance preventing reforms and high level of corruption. Soon it was obvious that the government was unable to deal those problems and even was part of them (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). Not only Basescu, then the DP minister of Transport, resigned but also later the Democratic withdrew all its remaining ministers from the cabinet. Few months later Victor Ciorbea resigned as he was internally accused for inefficiency in the economic reforms. Radu Vasile, also from the CDNPP, replaced him and the Democratic Party rejoined the government (Bugajski 2002). Although Vasile managed to bring inflation under control, the problems continued, as also the President Constantinescu was found unable to impose order.

The situation was not reversionary and even the appointment of National Bank President, Mugur Isarescu, as PM could not bring positive results (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). After the deeply unpopular decision to back NATO's military offensive against the Milosevic regime the government and the President lost any opportunity to regain the electorate. What was left to remembered from the CDR was poor-quality leadership particularly of the NLP-CD, an ineffective partnership with the Presidency and internal "quiet guerrilla wars" (Gallagher 2005).

The crisis in the CDR gave advantage to the opposition in the campaign for the 2000 elections. The government was unable and so it was its President. Romanians lost confidence and faith to the reformist parties that only managed to bring economic crisis (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004). On the contrary former President Ilescu had the time to transform his party and to persuade Romanians that he could give them social protection and follow a medium-term economic strategy without misuse of the public money. People had forgotten his rule and his opening to opponent parties make him a modern politician. The FDSN signed an alliance with the Roma, in return to the DAHR participation in the 1996 government (Gallagher 2005).

Presidential and parliamentary elections in 2000 changed once again the political status. The Party of Social Democracy (PSDR) of Ion Ilescu ran in an alliance called the Social Democratic Pole of Romania (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2001b,) was the winner increasing its votes while the Democratic Convention of Romania and its former member saw their electoral performance to decrease. The CDR even failed to pass the minimum threshold needed

for representation in parliament (Ek C. & Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade Division 2001). The National Liberal Party (PNL), a former coalition member of CDR 2000 ran separately, as did the Democratic Party headed by Petre Roman and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2001b). Ion Iliescu was elected President and Adrian Nastase the prime minister. He had replaced Iliescu as Chairman of the PSDR (Gallagher (2008).

However, the absolute winner was the Greater Romania Party, as became the second party winning 19.4 percent when in 1996 got less than 5 percent. Few weeks before the elections, the ultra-nationalist Vadim Tudor and his party won support as a way of discontent with parties of both the left and the right. Tudor spoke to people offering simple solutions without more economic sacrifice. Moreover, he criticized the corruption, blamed the “gypsy mafia” for the lawlessness and crime in the country and attacked the Jews and ethnic Hungarians. He focused on the exploited or ignored by the political class people and it was supported by younger people revenging on the older generation who had no recollections of the communist era (Ek & Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division 2001). Support to NATO’s war in Kosovo moved voters to the nationalist party (World Socialist Web Site a).

In addition, the warnings for Tudor were in vain as his links with the pre-1989 regime were seen unimportant and memories had faded away (Ek & Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division 2001). The GRP, as the PSDR, was also helped by the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS). It published a list of candidates who had collaborated with the Securitate in which only the leader of the NLP Quintus was included and nobody from the PSDR and the GRP<sup>8</sup>; although it was well known that the GRP had former Securitate figures and collaborators (Gallagher 2005).

The PSDR formed a minority government, although Tudor offered to form a coalition, as it was supported by the PNL and DAHR that wanted to prevent the influence of the PRM, and the opposition was too weak (Ek & Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division 2001). The PSDR accepted its former enemy’s support due to Western pressure and EU funds being on the way, that the party could not lose by acting as it did before 1996 (Gallagher 2005). The PSDR had changed its anti-

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<sup>8</sup> As it had refused to hand over its candidate list for verification by the CNSAS (Gallagher 2005).

western image and was renamed to the Social Democratic Party (PSD) (Gallagher, 2008). However, the party remembered its old tradition; it rewarded its supporters while isolating the opponents (Ek & Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division 2001) and controlled the trade unions and security apparatus to ensure that the public would accept the painful economic measures in order to enter the EU (Gallagher, 2008).

In 2003 a new alliance appeared in the Romanian politics seeking power in the 2004 elections. It was the Justice and Truth Alliance (DA) by the Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2005). It had nominated Stolojan for presidency but when he withdrew the leader of the PD, Basescu, took his post. He brought to light his collaboration with the authorities so to be honest to the people and focused on the corruption. The Alliance addressed to all those hit by the economic policy of the PSD that caused a gulf between the rich and the poor. Although the PSD tried to exploit the EU'S decision to grant Romania the status of functioning market economy, the economic situation and the scandals damaged its image. The Minister of Justice was accused to interfere in the judicial process and PSD members to embezzle amount of EU funding (Gallagher, 2008).

The PSD ran in the 2004 elections also in an alliance, this time with the Humanist Party of Romania under the name National Union and remained the largest party in the parliament (Gallagher, 2008). But it lost the Presidential elections to Traian Basescu who appointed Calin Popescu-Tariceanu of PNL as prime minister. Popescu-Tariceanu formed a coalition government with the former allies of the PSD, the Humanist Party<sup>9</sup> and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (Global Economy Matters).

Soon the two ruling parties were in conflict. Basescu and Popescu-Tariceanu disagreed on many issues and by the end of the term they didn't even speak to each other, not even in public (interview, Cluj). Basescu said that he regretted at having appointed Tariceanu as PM and accused him to be closely associate with controversial business groups. That was true as he had close ties with Dinu Patriciu who gave financial support to the PSD. PNL started making common cause with PSD in issues that threatened the political elite (Gallagher, 2008).

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<sup>9</sup> later known as the Conservative Party (PC)

In 2007 the prime minister not only dismissed ministers supported by PD and Basescu (Global Economy Matters) but also members of the PNL opposed to the influence of Patriciu, including strong figures as Stolojan and Stoica. They formed a new party, the Liberal Democratic Party headed by Stolojan and supported the unification with the Basescu's PD (Gallagher, 2008). The government then was supported by the PSD and together voted to suspend Basescu from office on the grounds that he had violated the Constitution (Global Economy Matters).

He was replaced by Nicolae Vacaroiu, member of PSD, who held a referendum in which the electorate was to decide whether or not to approve the suspension of Basescu. 74 percent of the Romanians overturned the result and the President remained in his post. It was the young, urban and middle-class voters that decided to keep Basescu. Tariceanu had lost his credibility and moreover, the Office of the Prosecutor-General launched criminal investigations on his government (Gallagher, 2008).

The latest elections in 2008 changed the political scene in Romania. The Democratic Party renamed to Democrat Liberal Party after merging with the Liberal Democratic Party while the PSD ran again with the Conservative party. The PDL won the elections but only with 1 percent difference to the PSD. The Greater Romania Party failed to enter the parliament.

Both winning parties declared to form a government with their own prime minister (BBC, 2008). The two rivals agreed in a alliance governance PDL - PSD "PARTNERSHIP FOR ROMANIA, 2008 - 2012" and portfolios were given equally between the two parties (PDL official). PDL party leader Emil Boc proposed Theodor Stolojan as Prime Minister but he later refused so President Basescu appointed the mayor of Cluj Boc as PM (Euronews).

FSN- Social Democratic Party (PSD) Partidul Social-Democrat, Partidul Democrat Liberal (PDL)

The National Salvation Front took power after the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in December 1989. Former Romanian Communist Party RCP officials and democratic activists created the party led by Ion Iliescu, who became the President of Romania after receiving 85 per cent of the vote in the Romanian presidential elections in May 1990. The Front was at the beginning a Marxist and neo-communist party

opposed to a multi-party political system but soon adopted a clearer Western-style social democratic and free market orientation (Bugajski 2002).

The original FSN lasted until 1992 when it split into two parties: the Democratic National Salvation Front, led by Iliescu and a renewed National Salvation Front led by Petre Roman. The former changed its name to Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PSDR) and to Social Democratic Party (PSD) in 2001 merging with the Romanian Social Democratic Party (Siaroff 2000). PSD is a direct descent of FSN, National Salvation Front as many of PSD members were in FSN (interview, Cluj).

Its current president is Mircea Geoana and its symbol is 3 roses, inside a red colored square. PSD's ideology supports the equal access of everyone "to rights, obligations and opportunities. Culture, lifelong learning, health, equal rights are for everyone and not privileges". As a member of the Party of European Socialists(PES) and socialist international (SI) it "defend social justice, solidarity, freedom, equality, and responsibility." and it is open to everyone who shares the same ideas. It supports the modernization of Romania and its further integration in the European Union's family. According to its documents the party will work to "restore trust between people, between people and institutions for the construction of several companies, responsible to all its members" (PSD, 2005).

The second descendant of the original National Salvation Front is the Democratic Liberal Party. After the split with Iliescu's party, the FSN led by Roman remained in opposition and was renamed to Democratic Party (PD) and took its present name in 2007 when merged with the Liberal Democratic Party (PLD)<sup>10</sup>, separated from the National Liberal Party, to "build a strong political right" (PDL, 2009).

Belonging to the European People's party , PDL is a center-right party of liberal conservatism having as its symbol one blue rose resting on the PD-L letters inside an orange square and its president is Emil Boc. It is open to any democratic centrist, liberal or Christian Democrat. Its target is the "development of Romanian society to flourish by promoting democratic values and principles of freedom, responsibility and solidarity"(PDL,2009).

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<sup>10</sup> headed by Theodor Stolojan

National Liberal Party Partidul Național Liberal (PNL),

PNL is traced back to 1848, as a right-of-center party that supported a free market economy later banned by the communist regime. After the regime change it called for a resumption of the throne by exile king Michael but gave it up when the ex-king declined nomination as the PNL's presidential candidate (Bugajski 2002). Although it was a founding member of the Democratic Convention, soon it withdrew its support. That move caused splits in the party as two of its factions did not follow it and remained forming the PNL-DC. In 1993 Mircea Ionescu-Quintus replaced Radu Campeanu in party's leadership, so the later left the party and established a new one named PNL-Campeanu (Bugajski 2002).

Its current President is Crin Antonescu and its symbol is a blue arrow inside a yellow square pointing to the upper right corner. Its ideology belongs to right and to liberalism. "Being right means being a free person, with initiative and aspirations. Being right means being liberal". PNL is a member of European Liberal, Democratic, Reform party (ELDR) and the Liberal International (LI). It works for the future of Romania in the European political and economic family. It characterizes itself as party of prosperity and progress that works for Romanian of any economic class and respects human rights and civil liberties (PNL, 2008).

Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România (UDMR)

The Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians in Romania is the party representing the Hungarians, 98.9 per cent of them living in Transylvanian counties (DAHR, 2008). In the party they had been moderated and radicals, the former trying for the minority rights through democratic forms and the later pressing only for the Magyars demands and "territorial autonomy. The moderate platform was to rule the party initially by Domokos and later by Bela Marko. They claimed to "work within the institutions of the state to achieve what was possible regarding to minority interests". Although it asked for Hungarians be recognized as a "co-nation" or "a state-building" nation, it took rational positions in order not to provoke the extremists and proposed "local and regional self-administration" and "not autonomy or advocate separatism" (Bugajski, 2002). Its electoral performance helped it to be always in the

politics of the country. It does not defend only the human rights for the Hungarian community and its internal self-determination but also individual and collective national minority rights. It asks for quality, non-discrimination and the use of mother tongues in private and public life as well the introduction of independent native-language school system. It supports the market economy, the rule of law and the separation of powers (DAHR, 2008).

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania is member of the European Democrat Union (EDU), the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) and the European People's Party (EPP) (DAHR, 2008).

#### Great Romania Party (GRP), Partidul România Mare (PRM)

The Greater Romania Party was formed in 1991 by the Eugen Barbu and Corneliu Vadim Tudor, supporters of Ceausescu (CNN.com). The later even said that the 1989 revolution was “an “armed attack” against the country by Hungarians and former Soviet Union (Bugajski 2002). After the death of Barbu, Tudor was elected the party leader. It is a party that caused a lot of discussion in and out of the country because of its declarations and its development. Corneliu Vadim Tudor is a close friend of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the far right Front National Party in France and supported the later in his second term, which he lost to Jacques Chirac (interview, Cluj).

It is a nationalist, far right, xenophobic, anti-ethnic Hungarian, anti-Roma, Antisemitic, party (CNN.com). Tudor statements and actions provoked reactions and his parliamentary immunity was lifted twice by the Romanian Senate in 1997. The attempt to outlaw the Greater Romania Party was unsuccessful as the Bucharest Court rejected that request (PRM, 2009). Later, the party rejected all these accusations and cooperated in 2003 with Israeli company for communications and public relations “Arad Communication” and Corneliu Vadim Tudor was declared against anti-Semitism ((PRM, 2009).

Its documents claims to be center left, of Christian Orthodox beliefs that has the aim to “take over power and purpose is to develop good citizens of society by achieving the public interest and the national interest”. Moreover, it promotes the “prosperity affirmation of Romanian society in the European and world values in conditions of full sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country”. It



supports market economy but also the “protection of national production” (PRM, 2009).

In 2004 it changed its name to Popular Greater Romania Party (PPRM) and party’s leadership was given to Corneliu Ciontu and Vadim Tudor was called first honorary president of the party. However, Tudor got his position back a year after (PRM, 2009).

PRM through the years has used slogans as "Patria Up, down Mafia" and "Facts, not words" “Romania must regain its old size”. Its symbol is an aquilla, eagle specie, resting with one leg on a branch of mountain top, the other leg lifted with its both wings open, its right one wide open and left one pointing down, holding a cross in its beak. It has a Women Organization and the Greater Romania Youth Organization of Greater Romania ((PRM, 2009).

Its success was caused by the lack of rival nationalist groups, public disappointment but also it’s leader’s charismatic populism and the use of mass media (Bugajski 2002). However as noticed by its electoral performance its support it has declined. Internal scandals thinned its support the last decade, but it still plays an important role same to its rival the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (interview, Cluj).

### 3.3 Comparison of the two countries

The regime change found both people and parties in Bulgaria and Romania without political identity and affiliation. The two countries were immediately governed by the parties that brought the democracy, the Socialist Party in Bulgaria and the National Salvation Front in Romania. Both of them had communist past and used the bureaucracy to rule the country. Soon opposition parties were formed, although at the beginning they were more like “spiritual communities”, circles of friends clientelist groups, that put aside the differences to cooperate in the elections (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

However, in Romania it took almost seven years to the opposition to take the power, while in Bulgaria it became government in the first free elections. Thus it did not last long and the Socialist party was the in office. The years 1996, 1997 began the consolidation in both countries; in Bulgaria the opposition returned to power and was the first to govern full term while in Romania it was the first time that the opposition

won the elections. Voters started thinking rationally and knew by that time what they wanted and punished the governments, which failed to give them results (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

By comparing the two countries through the years someone can find their party system's similarities. Party splits, coalitions and electoral alliances as also coalition governments or minority government are usual and governments were supported sometimes even by former allies, like in Romania in the case of the DAHR backing the PSD. Important is to be noticed the role of the minority parties. The Movement of Rights and Freedoms and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania played an important role in the political scene. It supported and participated in governments, but also they were responsible for the downfall of some, like the 1992 government in Bulgaria and the 1996 one in Romania.

Left and right governments let their supporters down, failing to respond to their expectations, unable to combat corruption and improve economy. New parties appeared promising changes, accusing the minorities and playing with the fears of the citizens to gain votes. However in Romania, the Greater Romania Party alerted more with its boom of electoral performance in 2000. Same it could be considered in the case of the ex-king's Simeon II party that managed in few months after its creation to rule the country. The difference is that it was not an anti-European party or a nostalgic, monarchist party (Berglund, Ekman & Aarebrot 2004).

Bulgaria since 2001 had stable governments determined to rule a full mandate and that is seen in the case of the previous government, which despite many no-confidence votes managed to survive. In the contrary in Romania the election alliance split and the former allies became foes and an opposition party backed the government.

The Bulgarian party system can be characterized as modern, having new formations to rule the country, as the new party of Prime Minister Borissov. On the contrary in Romania there has been a "recycling" of political formations that split from parties. The current government is a coalition between the rivals Democratic Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party; the two being members of the National Salvation Front, the first ruling party in Romania, it would be like going back to 1990. However, things today are different; it could be a sign of consolidation as the two parties could never before cooperate and the reason of the initial split, the confrontation between Iliescu and Roman, does not exist anymore.

#### 4. Development and interaction of civil associations

##### 4.1 Case of Bulgaria

Civic awareness is an important element in the way of democratization and it is achieved through civil associations, NGOs and trade unions. Although the communist regime destroyed the civil society as it dominated and controlled it, the first signs of civil groups appeared soon with the movements against the regime and the state (Koleva 2006). The creation NGOs, and other associations, from employees' to cultural, was not easy because Bulgarians were suspicious to the new "reality" of civil society as the experience from the communist system of associations which establishment was violent and insufficient, made them mistrust the organizations (European Centers of Excellence (2006). Even today, some older people avoid cooperating with others because they are disappointed from the communist system but also from the post-communist, as they cannot follow the rules of the "game"; they don't have the know-how (interview, Haskovo).

Organizations were perceived not only partners of the state but also external involvement because they were created by foreign donors, and as so could not defend citizens' rights but their donor's (Koleva 2006). According to a PHARE survey 80% of NGO funding is provided by external donors (Tancau 2007). In 2004 the Bulgarian Donors Forum, member of the WINGS and partner to CEENERGI<sup>11</sup> was established to "represent and help major donors in Bulgaria" (Bulgarian Donors Forum, 2006).

The public opinion over organizations today has changed and people believe that all these organizations do help the society, as they fill the gap, continue the work of the state or even control it. People trust and support the environmental NGOs, for example, to control the ecological disaster once the minister of environment is believed to turn a blind eye as it is linked to businessmen (interview, Haskovo).

According to a survey more than the majority believes that the cooperation between civil society and the state is limited except for the so-called social partners (trade unions and employers) on labour issues. Moreover, the responders said that the state has good relations only with some organizations operating at the national level,

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<sup>11</sup> A worldwide network to support donors and regional initiative for the development of corporate philanthropy respectively (donors official)

such as, the National Rehabilitation and Social Integration Council, the Welfare Assistance Board, the National Child Protection Council, and the National Board on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (Tancau 2007).

The European Union has helped practically as a founder or donor, supporting projects and programs such as Civil Protection Mechanism, Culture 2000, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Leonardo da Vinci II, Media Plus, Socrates II, and Youth (European Centers of Excellence, 2006). However it has offered also substantially, due to the requirements for the accession in the EU.

In 2001 a parliamentary committee on the issues of civil society was created and the Law for the Non-Profit was established. Parliamentarians, NGO experts and leaders worked together on that, proving the importance of the civil society in the development of modern Bulgaria. (Toftisova, 2001).

The number of associations has been increased in Bulgaria and their subjects are broadened; democracy, economy, human rights, disable people, culture, access to information are some of them. Most of them are located in the biggest or wealthiest cities in the country (Tancau 2007).

As far as “the exchange of information in order to support sustainable development, democracy and civil society” is concerned there are the BlueLink Information Network of Environmental NGOs, started in 1998 as a joint project of environmental NGOs from different cities in Bulgaria (BlueLink, 1998-2009), the Bulgaria Development Gateway, an initiative of the Bulgarian think tank Center for the Study of Democracy, focused on “enhancing regional cooperation and transfer of good practices among country gateway teams and other e-development partners in Southeast Europe” (Bulgaria Development Gateway) and the Access to Information Programme Foundation created by journalists, lawyers, sociologists, and economists which works in the area of human rights in order to “promote the right to information and initiate a public debate on related issues” (Access to Information Programme Foundation, 2007).

There are organizations and centres to promote democracy, civil society such as the Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-Profit Law which role is to “provide legal support for the development of civil society in Bulgaria” (Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2009), the Bulgarian Charity Aid Foundation, part of the global network of Charities Aid Foundation organisations with headquarters in the United Kingdom, for the “development of modern philanthropy and strong and effective non-profit sector”

(Bulgarian Charities Aid Foundation, 2009) and the Centre for Liberal Strategies “an independent NGO involved in the structuring and implementation of the public debate in Bulgaria on key issues”(Centre for Liberal Strategies, 2009)

In addition there is the Centre for Social Practices “for the strengthening of civil society and NGOs in Bulgaria” which achieved “the introduction of the institution of Ombudsman into Bulgarian society, as well as the structuring of NGOs as vehicles of dialogue and trust in ethnically mixed and politically turbulent parts of the country”(Centre for Social Practices). A further initiative was “The Coalition 2000” against corruption, in cooperation with other Bulgarian NGOs and the support of the United States Agency for International Development (Anticorruption). In this field important is also the Transparency International-Bulgaria, the first Anti-corruption Resource Center in Bulgaria. Cooperating with Transparency International - Secretariat and funded by the European Commission (Transparency International-Bulgaria, 2004).

In the field of human rights there are a number of organization, the most important being Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, a member of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, which represents 46 independent human rights organisations in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and North America working together internationally to insist on compliance with human rights standards (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee) and the Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights Foundation “aiming at the establishment and effective implementation of international standards in the sphere of legal protection of human rights in Bulgaria” (Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights Foundation).

The Association for Refugees and Migrants is an organization established by social workers, lawyers, journalists, teachers and students “to promote social and cultural integration of recognized refugees and migrants”(Association for Refugees and Migrants, 2006). Disabled have their own union to defend their interests, as it is the Union of the Disabled People in Bulgaria, Union of Blind People and the Union of Deaf People (Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Central and southeastern Europe a, 2008).

A number of organizations have as their subject the environment, like the Bulgarian Environmental Partnership Foundation which focus is to “enable local communities advocate for and protect their environment and cultural heritage”. It cooperates with the Frankfurt Zoological Society to protect the endangered species

and the Green Balkans, the largest Bulgarian non-governmental nature conservation organization (Environmental Partnership for Sustainable Development, 2008).

To name some other are: the Association of Bulgarian Ecologists, the Association Ecoforum, the Black Sea Environmental Information Center, the Bulgarian Society for the Conservation of the Rhodope Mountains, the Bulgarian Society of Natural Research and the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme an intergovernmental programme working in co-operation with the Ministry of Environment and Water, scientific institutions, local authorities and NGOs (Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Central and southeastern Europe a 2008).

Culture is part of an independent society and in Bulgaria there a number of unions representing it such as the Union of Bulgarian Film Makers, the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, the Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers, the Union of Bulgarian Artists, the Union of the Bulgarian Actors and the International Charity Foundation for the Development of Islamic Culture (Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Central and southeastern Europe a 2008).

Regarding to the trade unions and employees' and business associations, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) is the biggest and most representative trade union organization, a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria). Another member of the later is the historical Podkrema Trade Union Confederation that organized a strike against the government of A. Lukanov in 1990 and against the government of Videnov in 1997 (Podkrema Trade Union Confederation, 2009).

The most important associations representing the employees and are the Employers Association of Bulgaria (EABG), the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), the Union for Private Economic Enterprise, the Union of Private Bulgarian Entrepreneurs Vazrazhdane and the Bulgarian Industrial Association which is a member of the Confederation of the European Business and the International Organization of Employers (European industrial relations observatory on-line, 2003).

The majority of the organizations are members and partners of international networks; cooperate with neighbouring countries such as Romania, Macedonia, and Albania; and work together in projects. The greater supporters are Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (USA), German Marshall Fund (USA), Balkan Trust for Democracy

(USA), Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe (USA), United States Agency for International Development, King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium), the World Bank, PHARE programs of EU, United Nations Development Programme, the Open Society Institute and a number of embassies in Bulgaria.

#### 4.2 Case of Romania

The year 1996 did not only mark a real change in the political sphere but also in the civil society. Although after the regime change Romania was a pro-democratic country with “reasonably fair electoral procedures”(Bell 1997), the civil society mistrusted the institutions and the organizations. Mass media often accused the NGOs for smuggling cars and interference in politics by receiving illegal funds to support political parties but Romanians<sup>12</sup> started being more active in civil society (Tancau 2007).

The 1996 government was opened to an interaction with NGOs in consulting and information level while each Ministry set up an office to work with NGOs (Tancau 2007). Responsible for the change was the then president, Emil Constantinescu known for his “struggle for an open mind and society”(Wysong (2005). Moreover during his term he established an association named the Citizen Education Association “promoting the awareness, monitoring the relationship between institutions of the state and citizens and to ensuring transparency of decision-making, encouraging active participation of citizens in public life”( Citizen Education Association).

The Ceausecu regime left behind families with many children unable to raise them, ended up to inadequate orphanages or on the streets. Romania ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child but the measures taken were not enough and the government was incapable to help due to lack resources. The phenomenon became public though the media and charities and individuals started up projects to help children (Romania International Children’s Foundation, 2009).

The Federation of NGOs Active in Child Protection (FONPC) with its slogan “leave no child out” was part of the UN project Needs Assessment Report and of a French – partnership project for developing a Training Resource Center. Its aim is “to

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<sup>12</sup> mainly people from Transylvania.

support the NGOs members to be more involved in advocacy activities and to provide training for the professionals in different field of child protection” (Federation of NGOs Active in Child Protection, 2006).

Organizations working with abandoned children are the Children on the Edge-Romania, the Foundation COTE, the Livada Orphan Care, the Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation, the Heart of a Child Foundation and the Romania International Children’s Foundation (Child Right Information Network, 2009). The NGO/UNICEF Regional Network for Children in Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States is an organization which aims is “to strengthen and facilitate cooperation between NGOs and UNICEF for children's rights and their well-being, within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Child Right Information Network, 2002).

Save the Children Romania and Union and Nationale des Organisations des Personnes Affectees par VIH/SIDA are important organizations working also with children affected with AIDS as are the Trustul Ungureni Orphanage (Child Right Information Network, 2009), which project “A home and a farm for young people with disabilities” was financed by the British charity (Trustul Ungureni Orphanage), and the SOS Children’s Villages Romania (Child Right Information Network, 2009).

Regarding to the organizations focusing to the development of the civil society the Civic Alliance, a cooperation of major civic associations, is the largest organization of its kind in Romania (Civic Alliance) while Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation is active in six countries and cooperates with local and international organisations and companies (Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation, 2009). The Civil Society Development Foundation, supported from the European Commission, aims to the 'development of the civil society organizations” (Civil Society Development Foundation) and the Association for Implementing Democracy’s mission is “to contribute to the development of democracy in Romania by promoting democratic values, strengthening the democratic institutions and supporting a new generation of leaders for Romania; and coopearting with NGOs, government institutions, mass media organizations”( Association for Implementing Democracy, 2005), a goal that also shares the Asociatia Pro Democratia.

Of great importance is the local office of the Freedom House in Romania a nonprofit organization that “promotes freedom, democracy and human rights”. Freedom House was a founding member of Coalition for a Clean Parliament, the most



important anti-corruption program which documented the cases of 222 parliamentary candidates from the ranks of the major parties that were asked to withdraw their candidacy as inappropriate to hold high elected office<sup>13</sup>. In addition it established Initiative for a Clean Justice Along with six other NGOs (Freedom House Romania, 2009). The national branch of Transparency International, the TI-Romania has also the objective to “fight corruption on a national and international level” (Transparency International Romania). Furthermore the Office of the Ombudsman and the increase of complaints<sup>14</sup> by people for violation of rights by the public administration is a sign of a dynamic society (Commission of the European Communities 2004).

The PHARE program funded the Association for Human Rights in Romania - Helsinki Committee defending the human rights was established, which cooperates with local partners in Moldova, the Western Balkans and the Black Sea (Romania - Helsinki Committee). Additionally CIVITAS Foundation for Civil Society was founded to motivate “local and regional development” (CIVITAS Foundation for Civil Society, 2003). Referring to human rights, should be mentioned also the ACCEPT the first Romanian non-governmental organization defending and promoting the rights of homosexuals (Accept Association).

Thematically in Romania there are also environmental, banking, employees’, women, cultural, youth and providing information and assistance to NGOs associations. The Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation is one of the well-known being member of the Environmental Partnership (EP) which has projects in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria, apart from Romania (Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation).

The Women’s Associations of Romania (AFR) was “the first democratic women organization founded in order to unify, organize, represent and protect women rights in Romania”. It has participated to several international events England, Bosnia, China, Cuba, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Russia, and U.S.A, among others. It is member of The Coalition for Reproductive Rights in Romania, and a founder of The Coalition for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Romania (Women’s Associations of Romania, 2009).

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<sup>13</sup> Only the DP agreed to do so (PDL OFFICIAL)

<sup>14</sup> Between September 2003 and August 2004, the Ombudsman received 5 143 petitions (Commission of the European Communities 2004)

The Romanian Banking Association (RBA) represents and defends its members' interests, promotes the principles of banking policy and the cooperation among banks. It has contacts and dialogue with institutions and ministries such as the National Bank of Romania, the Commissions for Budget, Finance, the Ministry for Public Finance and international institutions and bodies like EU commissions, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Romanian Banking Association, 2006).

As far as the trade unions is concerned the most important are the National Trade Union Confederation "Cartel ALFA", the National Confederation of Trade Unions of Romania Fratia, both being members of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)(Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Central and southeastern Europe b, 2008), member of the later is also the Meridian National Trade Union Confederation.

Roma community has its own associations aiming to improve the living conditions of Roma in Romania. Some of them are the Foundation Resource Center for Roma, the Roma Women Association in Romania and the Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center.

The main funding comes from donors from outside, the biggest to be the German Marshall Fund of the US, United States Agency for International Development, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the European Union, Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe, the Foundation for an Open Society, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. Nevertheless there is the Romanian Donors Forum, a federation of the Environmental Partnership Foundation, Carpathian Foundation Romania, Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation, the Resource Center for Roma Communities, the Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, supporting the "development of donors' community and the promotion of philanthropy"(Romanian Donors Forum).

#### 4.3 Comparison of the two countries

Civil Society is "independent from state institutions or business which interact with the decision makers and the state institutions influencing them, in order to defend the rights and the interests of the groups of citizens they represent"(Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF)).

Romania and Bulgaria managed to have a number of associations filling the gap of the work of the governments. Although at the beginning it was hard due to the communist legacy, the mistrust between the associations and the competition for funds, almost twenty years after the fall of communism, according to interviews taken for this paper, both countries have a developed system of associations, which people believe to be working properly, and to offer to society. Nevertheless, two out of ten are members of these associations although eight out of ten wouldn't mind work voluntary in one of them, if necessary and the most common way to contribute to an association is by financial help.

The civil societies in Romania and Bulgaria do not differ much as there is a range of associations, most of them founded and supported by the same donors, some of them being local branches and cooperating with other countries and finally are located in the capitals. The difference is that the majority of educated Bulgarians stayed in Bulgaria and those who left returned with the know-how on the contrary the younger, educated Romanians preferred to leave the country (anonymous interviews, Haskovo, Bucharest, 11/08/09, 16/08/09).

## 5.0 Conclusion

Bulgaria and Romania are considered to have a post-communist history with common turning points, starting with the first step to democracy with the regime change and continued with their recognition as democratic by their accession to Western organizations; the NATO and the European Union. However, their post-communist history has also differences.

In Bulgaria the main characteristic of the first post-communist decade was the governmental instability, with eight governments in eight years, from 1989 to 1997 (Bugajski, 2002) as only after the 1997 government managed to rule the country for four years. The basic element of the second decade is the appearance of new parties, the NMSP and the GERB, but also the fact that managed to win the elections only few months after their establishment.

That shows that the voters do punish with their preference the former ruling parties but it also is a proof that there is not an electoral orientation and affiliation as they trust and vote whoever promise them to fulfil their expectations. According to a survey the majority of Bulgarian is disappointed with the manner of governing of the

country and that they believe that the country governed best in the 1960-70s and the 1980s. They are even unable to compare the Bulgarian Governments since 1989 or to define their political affiliation (Vitosha Research, 2000). According to the interviews taken for this paper, Bulgarians are interested more in the politics of the EU as being disappointed by their governments' policies they are waiting from the EU to take decisions.

However, the fact that there is not a bipolar party system and that there is opportunity to alternative parties to be heard is a sign of a democracy. In addition the role of a minority party as an opposition but also a governing party shows a civil and political society able to put aside any religious or nationality issue. The civil society is active, helped by foreign donors and foreign associations, and is expanded in areas where is believed the governmental institutions unable to act.

In Romania it was more difficult for people to let their fears go and to elect someone else than the party and its leader responsible for the uprising and the change regime, Ion Iliescu. It took almost seven years for the opposition to really cooperate and take office, although it was formed sooner, in 1992. That government change was also confidence vote of the people to those promised to help the civil society development.

However, Romanians forgot quickly and not only brought again into power the former party but also gave their support to a nationalist, far rightist party which exploited their fears. That is a sign, like in Bulgaria, that the electorate did not have a party orientation but neither the parties have as they try to alliance with former foes or allies in order to win the elections and even break their governing alliances.

The last elections and the one percentage difference between the two rivals show that there is not room for other parties and Romania returns to a bipolar system. These two parties are the most important, after all, being the two mainly governing two decades the country.

Although since 1996 there is an active civil society with initiatives helped and supported by foreign organizations, the participation in associations is low. It was the Romanian people, mainly the youth, that refused the dismissal of Basescu but it is also them who are disappointed and avoid any other way of political expression like protesting. According to interviews the majority have never protested and as one said, "If I would feel to protest every time I'm not satisfied with something I would basically spend most of my days out in the streets".

Maybe Bulgaria and Romania differ, but they have some things in common. After two decades of the fall of communism, both countries have a consolidated party system which although has extremist elements, those are there to prove the openness of the system. Their party system is characterized by co-operations, alliances, splits and betrayal. Their civil society do exist and what is important to be noticed is Bulgaria and Romania are members of the same organizations, financed by the same donors, coming mainly from the United States and the European Union, and cooperating with other broader organizations.

Twenty years after a communist legacy, especially the one in Romania, are not enough for those countries to achieve what others did years before. The accession to European Union did not manage to destroy communist traditions that have left and the agenda has left the same; corruption, living standards, unemployment. However, the latest elections in 2009 in Bulgaria and in 2008 in Romania are another turning point in their history; a new party forming a minority government which broke the tradition of the two times triple coalition government and the cooperation of the two historic rivals for the first time in history.

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## ANNEX

## Electoral Performances

## BULGARIA

BSP	%	SEATS
July 1990	47,5	211
October 1991	33,14	106
December 1994 the BSP-led leftist coalition	43,50	125
April 1997 BSP-led leftist coalition	22,44	58
June 2001, the BSP-led Coalition for Bulgaria	17,15	48
June 2005, the BSP-led Coalition for Bulgaria	31	82
June 2009	17.7	40
European Parliament Elections		
June 2007	21,41	5
June 2009	18.5	4

UDF	%	SEATS
July 1990	36.2	144
October 1991	34,36	110
December 1994	24,23	69
April 1997	52,26	137
June 2001	18,18	51
June 2005	7.7	20
June 2009 with the DSB	6.8	15
European Parliament Elections		
June 2007	-	-
June 2009	7, 95%	1

GERB	%	SEATS
June 2009	39.7	116
European Parliament Elections		
June 2009	21.69	5

ATAKA	%	SEATS
June 2005	8,1	21
June 2009	9.4	21
European Parliament Elections		
June 2007	14.20	3
June 2009	9.4	21

MRF	%	SEATS
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July 1990	8	23
October 1991	7.55%	24
December 1994	5.4%	15
April 1997 with the "Union for National Salvation"	7,6%	19
June 2001	7,45	21
June 2005	12.8	34
June 2009	14.5	38
European Parliament Elections		
June 2007	20,26	4
June 2009	14	3

NMSS	%	SEATS
June 2001	42.7	120
June 2005	19.9	53
June 2009	3.0	-
European Parliament Elections		
June 2007	6.27	1
June 2009	7.96	2

DSB	%	SEATS
June 2005	6.4	17
June 2009 Blue Coalition	6.8	15
European Parliament Elections		
June 2009	7.95	1

RZS	%	SEATS
June 2009	4.13	10
European Parliament Elections		
June 2007	4.1	10
June 2009	4.67	-

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## ROMANIA

PDL (NSF, PD, PDL)		CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES		SENATE
YEAR	%	SEATS	%	SEATS
June 1990	66.3	263	67.2	92
September 1992	10.2	43	10.38	18
November 1996 with PSDR(Social Democratic Union)	12.93	53	13.16	23
November 2000	7.03	31	7.58	13
November 2004 with PNL(Justice and Truth)	31.5	48	31.8	49
November 2008	32.36	115	33.57	51
European Parliament Elections		%		SEATS
June 2007		28.81		13
June 2009		29.17		10

PSD(DNSF, PSDR)		CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES		SENATE
YEAR	%	SEATS	%	SEATS
June 1990	NSF	NSF	NSF	NSF
September 1992	27.7	117	28.29	49
November 1996	21.52	91	23.08	41
November 2000 (Social Democratic Pole of Romania)	36.6	155	37.1	65
November 2004 with PUM	36.8	113	37.2	57
November 2008 with CP	33.1	110	34.16	49
European Parliament Elections		%		SEATS
June 2007		23.11		10
June 2009		31.7		11

## Political parties and civil associations in post-communist Bulgaria and Romania

PNL		CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES		SENATE
YEAR	%	SEATS	%	SEATS
June 1990	6.41	29	7.06	110
September 1992	2.6	-	-	-
November 1996 in Democratic Convention	DCR	DCR	DCR	DCR
November 2000	7	30	7.5	13
November 2004 with PD(Justice and Truth)	31.5	64	31.8	49
November 2008	18.57	65	18.74	28
European Parliament Elections		%		SEATS
June 2007		13.44		6
June 2009		14.52		5

DAHR		CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES		SENATE
YEAR	%	SEATS	%	SEATS
June 1990	7.23	29	7.20	12
September 1992	7.45	27	7.59	12
November 1996	6.64	25	6.82	11
November 2000	6,80	27	6,90	12
November 2004	6.2	22	7.3	10
November 2008	6.2	22	6.39	9
European Parliament Elections		%		SEATS
June 2007		5.52		2
June 2009		8.2		3

GRP		CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES		SENATE
YEAR	%	SEATS	%	SEATS
June 1990	-	-	-	-
September 1992	3.89	16	3.85	6
November 1996	4.46	19	4.54	8

November 2000	19.4	84	21.0	37
November 2004	13	48	13.63	21
November 2008	3.2	-	3.57	-
European Parliament Elections	% SEATS			
June 2007	-		-	
June 2009	8.65		3	

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Questionnaire For Interviews:

Parties

1. Are you interested in the politics of your country and the EU?
2. Do you follow the electoral differences of the political parties?
3. Do you know the names of the political parties that either split from a party or participated in a coalition? i.e NSF in Romania, UDF in Bulgaria
4. Are you a member of a political party?

Associations

1. Are you a member of a civic association?
2. Do you believe that civic associations like NGOs, women's associations or environmental one work properly and offer to society?
3. Would you work in an association voluntary?
4. Have you ever participated in a protest in your country?