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Introduction

This publication presents the final report under the National Security Risks for Bulgaria over the Next 10-15 Years Project. The project was implemented by a Risk Monitor team and was funded by the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the last 20 years, the sociology of risk and risk reduction policies have become particularly popular. The 2008 crisis unequivocally showed the importance of thinking in the terms of risk. However, policies of risk management remain outside the focus of Bulgaria’s public policies and political debate.

The goal of this project is to introduce a new understanding of “risk” and “risk society” in Bulgaria’s public sphere. The wider concept of risk, however, is here presented concretely and has been narrowed down to the domain of security, which, in its turn, is understood as “national security.”

Despite using the traditional language of “national security risks”, the report offers a new methodology and a qualitatively new orientation in the notions of risk and security in the context of Bulgaria. In this sense, the report aims to facilitate public policies by providing a new conceptual framework for understanding national security risks.

The project’s implementation took about a year and a half. Apart from the research entailed in developing concepts for risk reduction policies over the next 10-15 years, it included round tables, closed-door and public discussions, and collective and individual publications, among others.

Although the outcome of long discussions among all members of the team, the individual chapters of this report were written by: Stefan Popov, “Conceptual Framework” (2.1 – 2.5), “General Orientation: Megarisk” (3), “Criminality” (4.3), “The International Sphere” (4.5), “Conclusion” (6.1-6.2), Georgi Ganev, “Finance and the Economy” (4.1) and “Poverty” (5.6); Julian Popov, “Energy” (4.2) and “The Environment” (5.5); Albena Stambolova, “Social Collapse” (4.4) and “Mass Fears” (5.7); Petya Kabakchieva, “Social Collapse” (4.4), “Education” (5.1) and “Migration and Demographics” (5.4); Vassil Garnizov, “Social Collapse” (4.4), “Healthcare” (5.2), “Regional Development” (5.3) and “Migration and Demographics” (5.4).

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1. SUMMARY

The Context / Problem
National security policies aim to ensure the stability of essential institutions, preserve these institutions’ capacity to function, and avert any significant social collapse or disorder. Such policies are directly orientated towards the management of security risks.

Bulgaria has not developed up-to-date policies for its national security in this sense of the term. The idea of a conscious, targeted reduction of risks remains overshadowed by reactive positions. Governments rely on the “natural course of things”, within which the likelihood of catastrophic events, a social collapse and anarchy remains negligible. The last 20 years, however, have revealed the illusion of such a notion of natural insurance against risk.

Modern national security policies need a conceptual basis to provide the framework for any concrete strategy and its related policies. Such a concept has never been developed in Bulgaria, and so has never been open to public debate. All attempts to devise a concept or build a strategy on security have exhibited serious faults: abstraction, eclecticism, lack of focus, anachronisms, no evaluation of available resources, etc.

Methodological Orientation

A modern day concept of Bulgaria’s national security – considering the world after 1990, and particularly Bulgaria’s membership in NATO and the EU, as well as the context of the 2007-2008 crisis – must above all leave behind the realist concept dominant during the Cold War, when the global context was characterized by a bipolar bloc opposition. The conceptualizations of national security must also become strongly individualized, taking into account Bulgaria’s specificities in a manner that is as concrete as possible.

National security must be understood within the realist paradigm established after Thomas Hobbes. But in current conditions, foreign relations, military capability and territorial defence do not receive the extraordinary importance attached to them in realist theories. Bulgaria’s membership in NATO and the EU provides answers to these questions at the level of collective defence and security. In this respect, the country’s policies are coordinated with big nation states having the resources to pursue independent foreign policies.

Bulgaria needs to radically redirect its security policies to its interior. It is precisely the country’s domestic situation that is the most exposed to risk factors. This exposure concerns the country’s stability and the functioning of its public institutions. With such modifications in the realist concept of security, attention is drawn back to the question of statehood in its primary and fundamental forms.

Security and Constitutional Order

The fundamental question of this original type of Hobbesian concept is an
existential one: it concerns the very existence of basic institutional structures, and hence of constitutional order.

It would be a mistake, however, to confuse our modernized Hobbesian security paradigm with the idea of the so-called “internal security”, which does not suggest strategic orientations, but the operations of specialized intelligence and police structures. Although it addresses the domestic situation and the constitutional stability of the country, national security here is understood in the broadest possible sense – as related to the overall conditions necessary for the preservation of institutional order.

This orientation of the policies for national security risk reduction have been gaining ground in the last ten years in Bulgaria, albeit only partially. Future governments will need to radicalize it and apply it in a consistent manner. They will need to impose it as a central axis, serving to organize the way national security is addressed in different spheres.

Categories of Risks

In the medium term, and in modern day conditions, one risk emerges as a fundamental threat, as a megarisk. For Bulgaria, this risk concerns extreme states that may lead to an implosion, an interior collapse of the institutions threatening the constitutional order itself.

(The megarisk varies according to context: during the Cold War, it concerned the nuclear annihilation of one of the two super-powers; in the classical nation state – a military attack on a state’s territory; in a multi-nation federation like Yugoslavia – domestic civil war and disintegration; etc.)

In our modified concept, the megarisk of an interior collapse of the state approaches the very definition of national security: modern Bulgaria’s national security depends directly on reducing the megarisk of an implosion of the institutions.

National security risks can be divided into two categories according to the likelihood of an adverse event or process, the magnitude of such an event’s destructive impact on the institutional system, and the degrees of mediation between risk factor and adverse event.

The category of highest priority risks comprises five risk factors and their respective spheres: finance and the economy, energy, criminality, social collapse, the international context. These risks exert direct influence over the country’s statehood, and they bear direct relation to the stability of national institutions and the constitutional order.

The second category of risks includes seven risk factors and spheres: education, healthcare, regional development, migration and demographics, the environment, poverty, mass fears. These risks affect indirectly the stability of institutions. They increase the significance of the first category of risks, and hence also the pressure these risks exert over the megarisk and the possibility of an implosion of the state.
Limit-case States

In our concept of national security, it is considered of utmost importance that risks and risk factors do not act in an isolated manner. The interplay of different risks, their mutual influence and the accumulation of risk factors make the national security sphere more complex as an object of policies.

In the modified realist concept, the accumulation of risk factors makes it necessary to think about possible catastrophic scenarios. The interplay and accumulation of risks leads to limit situations and tipping points, beyond which the destabilization of the constitutional order becomes irreversible.

National security policies must identify the range of these critical scenarios and assess their likelihood. The development of national security strategies must be underpinned by constant monitoring, investigation and evaluation of the environment constituted through the categories of risk defined in this report.

General Recommendation

Preventive policies are the privilege of rich and prosperous states. Bulgaria is the poorest country in the European Union, and in the foreseeable future, its position is unlikely to change in any significant way. In these circumstances, implementing wide-ranging policies of risk reduction is unrealistic, as the required resources are lacking.

Nonetheless, the national security sphere must begin to develop in the direction outlined in the present concept. Security policies must:

1. definitively abandon concepts related to the notion of a foreign enemy, military capability and territorial defence;
2. expand the narrow understanding of those security institutions that play a direct role in safeguarding order;
3. develop in accordance with the modern notion of risk society, where risk constitutes an internal state of the social process;
4. tackle the great risks to the long-term stability of the institutions and the constitutional order;
5. be based on continuous observation and assessment of the interplay of risks within a broad social context, and more specifically:
   • monitor the accumulation of risks;
   • elaborate scenarios for developments leading to tipping points and collapse;
   • continuously assess the likelihood of reaching a threshold in stability.
2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. GLOSSARY: DEFINITIONS

Several terms have been used in this project, forming its conceptual core. Here are their definitions:

A risk is the likelihood of occurrence of an adverse event or process, generally, and in a broad sense, related to human activities that are subject to rationalization and management.

In this abstract form, a risk is neither an object, nor some state of affairs. It is only a functional, a perspective, which can contain and reveal to the view an unlimited set of social phenomena – processes, situations, social sectors, actions and so on. In this sense, the question “What is a risk?” – from any critically sensitive position – cannot receive a direct answer. The question is incomplete, even wrong, because a risk in itself is not an object but the possibility that an object, a situation, a process, etc. may become the condition for the occurrence of an adverse event.

Any question of the type “What is a risk?” is only an invitation to discuss given social forms and phenomena within the perspective of “risk”. Precisely then, it becomes evident that anything can be a risk. The possibility itself that an adverse event, which we call “risk”, may occur is always present, exactly because it is a mode of thinking, of reasoning, a type of sociological perspective. At the same time, its likelihood may be extremely low, close to zero, and so be negligible. This circumstance introduces the measurability of risk, which determines to what degree a given possibility should be taken seriously. In this sense, a risk is a probability characteristic. The evaluation and measurement of risk is a probability calculus, even if it may not be formalized mathematically, which is the case of the concept outlined in this report.

“A risk to…” expresses the intentional aspect of risk, its orientation towards a given object, process, or state of affairs.

A risk is always a risk “to something”, “to” the economy, “to” the financial stability, “to” the effectiveness of institutions or, in the terms of the present concept, “to” the national security, understood as the country's constitutional order. Using the word “risk” without an explicit reference to the intention contained in “to” amounts to a literary metaphor – for example, “he is a risky player.” But even in such cases, the word “risk” is used intentionally, its orientation being hidden behind the outward verbal form of the expression. “A risky player”, for instance, means that “his play” carries a risk “to…” something affected by the possible occurrence of an adverse event, say, a loss of some kind. But in the present investigation, risks are directly and visibly, by definition, bound to the internal intentionality of the notion of risk.

A risk factor is any risk, any “risk to…” which is organically bound with a concrete factual condition capable of increasing a risk’s impact and probability.

A risk factor is a factual state of affairs which engenders “a risk to…”, which
carries “a risk to...” or is a condition for “a risk to...”.

This aspect of the risk paradigm is particularly important in terms of its application: risk management and risk reduction policies generally do not deal with abstract risks, but with concrete risk factors. Risk factors introduce the specific factual dimension of risk. For example, a high level of institutional corruption in a given public sector is a risk factor “to” the entire sector – threatening it with disintegration, for instance, or great losses; low energy efficiency is a risk factor “to” the overall economic development of the country; political corruption is a risk factor “to” the parliamentary system, and so on.

A risk sphere (process, etc.) is a big public sphere which meets the condition defined above.

A risk sphere / process carries risk. A risk sphere is any risk factor that attains the scale of a sphere without changing in its essence. The difference is quantitative – it is in the scale, the scope. In this sense, it refers to the expansion of a concrete risk factor to the dimensions of an entire sphere.

For example, a deal concerning an old or unprofitable nuclear reactor can be a risk factor to electricity production in a power station; a disadvantageous deal for an entire power station – which could be the case of the Belene nuclear power plant, for example – is a risk to the country’s entire energy supply system; but a significant disruption of the entire energy supply system is a risk to the national security in the broad sense. This is the reason why the energy sector can be viewed as “a risk sphere.” In other words, the entire energy sector can carry risk, can be a risk factor to the stability of the country. This example illustrates well how a risk and a risk factor can rise up the scale to encompass a whole public sector. There is no qualitative difference in the structure of the risk, but through its expansion, a risk can thus approach a national security risk, which is the topic of this concept.

National security is a state of stability and the absence of any significant social collapse or disorder.

Security relates to basic institutions and their capacity to function. Here security is understood in the Hobbesian sense, i.e. we use Thomas Hobbes’ metaphor of the pre-statehood condition, the Hobbesian state of anarchy. Even if today it may seem somewhat dramatic (“war of all against all”), the upheavals and riots in England, France, Northern Africa, Bulgaria in 1997, or in the village of Katunitsa provide momentary images of this idea. We are interested in these and similar developments, and in trends leading in the same direction.

This view of security does not link security in any direct way to notions of a specific state of affairs – for example, with ideas of prosperity or development. Neither does it relate to notions of a specific kind of security, such as that of “human security” advanced in 1993 by UNDP’s Human Development Global Report. Within the paradigm of the so-called human security, the notion of security itself is determined through factual traits, such as social security, personal security, economic security, environmental security, etc. In the present concept, the focus is on “national security.” The notion of national security is not linked to particular factual traits and images; it is negative, related to the absence of social collapse or disorder, rather than to any idea about what the social world should look like.
The translation of risk is a process whereby the risks of one sphere are transferred to other spheres.

Given that risk is a probability, the translation of risk should not be understood as an actuality, as something that has occurred, but – within the risk’s universe – as a possibility, and as such, as having a degree of probability. The risk of collapse in one sphere can be transferred to other spheres, in so far as the sphere in question is a condition affecting the state of the other spheres. Chains of conditions, risk conditions, are thus formed. There exist risks in the education system whose impact, if they become actual events or processes, would transform education itself into a risk to... another thing, which, in its turn, would become a risk to a third thing, and so on, until the limit state of an overall collapse related to the country’s national security is reached.

The translation of risks introduces the dimension of interaction between risk factors and risk spheres. Yet, the translation of risks itself implies the possibility of transference, rather than the idea of interplay between spheres. For example, risk factors of deterioration in the education system may transform the entire sphere into a risk sphere; so we may have the case where the entire sphere of education fails to function properly, producing systematic illiteracy, people unable to compete on the labour market, etc.; education as a whole becomes a risk sphere; and in its turn, it relays its risks onto another sphere – for example, poverty, or critically low levels of well-being; poverty, in its turn, transfers its risks to the sphere of direct social interactions, where the risk of social conflict increases. Thus, risk factors in one sphere can be partially translated into another; or, when risks expand and spread through the entire sphere, this sphere can translate its risk characteristics onto other spheres. This transference introduces greater dynamics into the risk picture.

Threat here is considered to be a word that belongs to ordinary language, only apparently overlapping in meaning with the idea of a security risk.

This word, strictly speaking, has nothing to do with risk; alternatively, it is a figure of speech in the political rhetoric of “immediate threats”. In the present report, the use of this word has been avoided. Nevertheless, it may appear in cases where matters of style or variety of expression require it. “Threat” is a valid metaphor in the realist theory of international relations, and is also derived from Hobbes. But we depart significantly from this theory. We do not consider security as linked to a state of anarchy in international relations.

2.2. RISKS AND SECURITY

The object of this project is not risk in general, but specifically risks to the national security. Hence various risks related to frequent crises, development, the country’s inability to keep up with processes, its slow reforms and so on, have been left out. Our interest is in risks to Bulgaria’s national security over the next 10-15 years.

In our concept, national security is understood as the absence of given states X, Y, Z, in which the country is affected by serious social shocks. What these shocks may be remains open to discussion. In general, they may be social in a narrower sense; they may be military, international, financial, etc.
Our concept of national security follows a more traditional, realist, Hobbesian notion. The limit case of this concept, a case where there is no security, is represented by the image of continuous civil conflict. Consequently, in this case, we have the risk of emerging conditions for the disintegration of the institutional framework embodying the agreement between members of the community.

In this sense, the question posed by our concept, which determines the manner of its unfolding, is the following: Are there any risks – and what exactly are they – that could shift the current relatively calm situation towards a situation of Neo-Hobbesian (dis)order, a Hobbesian “natural state”, where a relatively durable form of civil conflict replaces social order?

2.3. SECURITY AND CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

The answer to the question of what would constitute a “serious social shock” is formal and falls back on the idea of constitutional order and its continuity. But constitutional order here is not considered from the point of view of the legal language of positive law, of the written constitution, but from the point of view of the constitutional idea and constitutionalism.

Two main spheres – that of the protection of rights and of the relations between branches of power – are of interest in terms of the constitutional order. In so far as the first sphere is guaranteed by the second one, and the second sphere is institutionalized in the narrow sense of the word, our interest is directed towards the state of the various institutions – their stability and their functioning.

The constitutional condition may be understood broadly, even symbolically. In view of this condition, of course, the security of the citizens forms the deeper interest of our concept of risk, but it does not do so directly. The focus falls on the institutions that guarantee the security of the citizens and on their functioning. Institutions substantiate the agreement on the rules meant to guarantee security. When these institutions are absent or when they are dysfunctional, the rules become eroded and may be entirely annihilated.

2.4. RISKS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Besides the narrower interest in “national security”, our concept defines “risk” as any likelihood that a catastrophic event may occur. But this larger definition needs to be limited: “risk” shall be understood as the probability of an event whose occurrence is subject to management and policy making. If a process leading to a catastrophe takes place naturally or quasi-naturally, it shall not be included in this portfolio of security risks.

This premise sets apart our national security concept from the paradigm of insurance and insurer policies. The position of an insurance company consists in calculating the probability of an adverse event and in defining a premium to indemnify the damages from such an event. In general, this basic calculation
does not imply any policies for reducing the risk of occurrence of an event. When the risk becomes lower, so does the premium, and vice versa. In this sense, insurance policies are entirely market-based and profit-driven.

Quite to the contrary, the main interest of the present project focuses on defining policies for reducing the risks of certain events. On the one hand, our framework excludes probable events that are not engendered by social subjects and that cannot be influenced by policies. On the other hand, our main interest is not in insurance, but in prevention. The concept defines a field for elaborating policies for security risk reduction.

2.5. POLICIES PARADIGM

The paradigm adopted by our concept is the one that underlies the 2010 National Security Strategy of Great Britain, chosen here as the most pragmatic and well-grounded example in terms of security policies. Some of its premises have been borrowed, but a variation of the paradigm has been elaborated. Only a basic internal differentiation of the paradigm is needed for the purposes of our concept.

The paradigm’s elements are “context” (problem, problem environment, problem situation), objective (overall objective, non-itemized), tasks (concrete, measurable objectives) and actions.

All elements, with the exception of context, are articulations of policies for tackling and “responding” to risks. Particularly important elements and connections in this adapted paradigm are the tasks / actions.

Of course, the paradigm’s most essential characteristic is the identification and the description of risks and risk spheres.

2.6. CATEGORIES OF RISK

The concept has been constructed using a methodological scheme to define tiers of higher and lower risk. This scheme has been borrowed from the British government and has been elaborated in various studies of risk.

The scheme arranges risks within a field defined by two axes – the abscissa and the ordinate. The former signifies the “magnitude” of a potential catastrophe, and the latter the “likelihood” of the event or process in question. A process / event of high risk is one where high likelihood combines with high impact. A low risk process is a combination of low likelihood and insignificant impact.

GRAPH: Classification of risks, likelihood and impact etc

Ordinate: Destructive impact (measured in terms of stability of the constitutional order)

Abscissa: Likelihood
The further up and to the right on this dotted line, the higher the impact and the probability of a risk.

Top left-hand corner bubble: High impact, low likelihood
Top right-hand corner: High impact, high likelihood
Bottom left-hand corner: Low impact, low likelihood

2.7. TIERS OF RISK AND RISK SPHERES

Following the above coordinate system, we have defined five highest priority risk spheres:

- Finance / the economy;
- The energy sector and collapse of the energy supply system;
- Direct social collapse or conflict;
- Criminalization of institutions and the public environment;
- Processes in the international context;

A defining characteristic of the highest priority risk spheres is that a collapse in any one of them becomes a direct risk to security and may provoke a social collapse.

We consider the following ten risk spheres to be the next highest priority:

- Education;
- Poverty;
- Marginalization;
- Migration;
- Healthcare;
- Demographics;
- Regional imbalances;
- Mass fears;

The defining characteristic of this second tier of risk spheres is that a collapse in any one of them may affect the spheres in the first tier. These spheres transfer risks and exert strong indirect influence over national security by having an impact on the highest priority risk spheres.
3. GENERAL ORIENTATION: MEGARISK

A megarisk, according to our concept, concerns the likelihood of an institutional implosion, a disintegration of the institutions to a degree at which the process acquires catastrophic magnitude and threatens the stability of the constitutional order.

It is evident that this meta- or megarisk should be placed above the two tiers of risks defined above. It is a "meta" risk because it is ranked above concrete risks and risk factors, although being closely related to them and not an independent risk in itself. But it is also a "mega" risk because it has the greatest possible impact or magnitude in the context of the views launched in this report.

Here is how concretely our concept defines the megarisk of institutional disintegration.

A particularly unfavourable combination of factors and circumstances may set in motion events across all concrete risk dimensions. Regardless of whether we observe risks independently, as they have been analytically defined here for the purposes of our concept, or in their interactions, which is the general recommendation of this report, a massive activation of risk factors would lead to a collapse of national security. The result would be a catastrophic event of the magnitude defined in the beginning of the report as the very object of national security over a 10-15 years horizon – namely, a collapse of the constitutional order.

The country’s institutions in their totality and in their interconnectedness make up the fabric of constitutional order. Their implosion, their disintegration, in a boundary case, amounts to a degree of disintegration of the constitutional order itself. The crises of some institutions can be observed, discussed, become the topic of heated political debate, and so on. One such area, for instance, a proverbial case in Bulgaria already, is the judiciary system, with its institutions and their crisis. But even in a very sensitive area such as the judiciary, a prolonged crisis has not yet led to an implosion of the institutions, let alone a collapse of the constitutional order.

In order for such a boundary case event to occur, first the crisis must provoke a paralysis of the judiciary system. Then, it must become impossible for the crisis to remain contained within its proper limits: a generalized crisis in the judiciary, to pursue our example, would have to expand to other spheres of institutional life. As long as the crisis is “contained” within the affected system or sphere (in the now traditional sense of “containment”, as defined by George Kennan and Harry Truman), it may not affect the basic premises of constitutional order. But if a crisis in a particular sphere, such as the judiciary, spreads through the entire sphere, the likelihood that it remains within that sphere diminishes. It is much more likely that a crisis in the entire third power would expand beyond its proper limits, attaining other essential constitutional spheres. In such processes and situations, a disruption of the constitutional order may be expected.
The overall orientation of the present concept allows for an eventuality of this order: the great risk Bulgaria faces concerns the country’s stability and the functioning of its essential institutions. The highest risk for Bulgaria over the next decade is precisely the risk of implosion in significant institutional sectors, which, in its turn, may lead to a weakening of the constitutional order, and, in the boundary case, to its discontinuation.

Such a supposition appears very general and abstract, especially if compared to the two tiers of concrete high priority risks and risk spheres. At the same time, it is quite concrete, if we consider it within a comparative perspective, rather than according to the vertical tier arrangement of risk factors and areas. Bulgaria, our concept claims, does not face risks to its territorial integrity or its borders. Even if the distant possibility of a military intervention exists, the policies of risk reduction in this particular area are not within the capabilities of an isolated Bulgaria, but within those of Bulgaria as a member of the defence alliance NATO.

Here is another example from the traditional portfolio of the Cold War: Bulgaria does not face a nuclear threat, which, for example, determines the orientation of national security policies of countries like Israel and North Korea. Neither can we speak of a risk of a nuclear attack in the sense in which countries like Russia and the USA identify, observe and measure such a probability (in the case of the US, also due to their global projection of interests and respectively, of military capability). But even if one were to consider seriously such a risk, it cannot become the object of Bulgaria’s policies, in so far as the country does not have the resources to pursue effective, rather than merely ritual, anti-nuclear policies. Anything to that effect would have to be undertaken within the framework of large international security regimes, at the basis of which stand classical nation states like the US and China, disposing of sufficient resources to parry such threats or reduce related risks.

Here is one last example, a favourite with traditional nationalists, be they hardliners or more amenable to discussion. Can Bulgaria find itself in a situation where it is at risk of bloodless conquest, as has been the case repeatedly in the past, when for a variety of reasons countries have lost their sovereignty, having found themselves within the orbit of large imperial bodies? Today, the European Union is a similar, albeit non-traditional, imperial body and Bulgaria’s membership is not only voluntary, but also highly desired within the country, given the perceived benefits of its membership in such a formation. In this sense, an entire ideology of national sovereignty – an ideology with a nationalist orientation – loses its relevance, annihilating in the process related security policies, organized around the idea of sovereignty as the indivisibility of the nation state in terms of foreign policy.

What we can observe today is precisely the opposite: sovereignty is understood mostly as an institutional capacity. This is also how sovereignty is understood within the present concept. The concept does not exclude the notion of sovereignty. It is rather understood from the perspective of the state’s institutional network, or in the boundary case, of the state’s constitutional capacity.

The risk of implosion of the institutions, of large sections of the institutional system, and, in the boundary case, of the constitutional order is the greatest risk Bulgaria faces. To put it in reverse terms: today and over the medium term of the next 15 years, the main task of Bulgaria’s national security policies is
the reduction of risks that may lead to institutional collapse, to implosion. The risks to Bulgaria, to put it bluntly, are internal risks; they need to be identified within the functioning of the institutions, their inner instability and the conditions causing their vulnerability in the long term.

The two tiers of risks, defined here as highest priority risks, have both direct and indirect influence over the increased likelihood of the megarisk. They constitute its preconditions, whereas it presents their maximum manifestation. To reiterate, if we imagine the greatest possible destructive impact of groups of risks and their respective interactions, the result would be precisely the event of the megarisk of institutional implosion.

Let us imagine the following scenario, which, however, follows quite closely our actual observations: Bulgaria is currently undergoing a heavy, long-term financial and economic crisis; this crisis is combined with a dramatically high illiteracy (at the moment, functional illiteracy is at about 40%); it is accompanied by extreme poverty and the marginalization of large groups; other factors may also unexpectedly exert influence – for example, an uncontrollable wave of immigrants. Given such an accumulation of risk factors, the risk – the megarisk – of a disruption in the functioning of the institutions grows. Our concept addresses precisely the potentially unlimited increase of the likelihood of such a risk.

When we think of possible scenarios, groups of risk factors can be played out in many different combinations. Scenarios are imaginary future developments, whose likelihood of occurrence, once a scenario has been elaborated (imagined), has to be measured. The likelihood may be close to zero, and so make a given scenario negligible in terms of implementing policies; i.e. it would not require devising particular policies. And vice versa – a scenario may be highly likely to become an actual event and process, which, in its turn, makes it not only an appropriate, but a mandatory object of policies.

The causes of an institutional collapse may be many and various. But it is important to keep in mind that in general, these causes are never purely technical: they cannot be reduced to administrative capacity in the technical sense of the word.

Various institutions, for example, purely formally may have high administrative capacity, but still be exposed to an implosive process. For instance, if they have largely lost credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the public; if their primary task of serving the public interest has been replaced; if they have been “hacked”, seized from the inside, captured (as in the popular term “state capture”); or, in another version of their primary task being substituted, if temporarily, yet to a sufficient degree, they have been privatized by a political party in power and begin to act as private monopolies; or yet, if they prove to be corrupted as a system, even without being under the domination of a given political force, which, generally speaking, can be the case of Bulgaria’s Prosecutor’s Office due to its excessive independence and the virtually complete lack of accountability in the judiciary sphere. Etc.

According to the present concept, an institutional collapse has more to do with these kinds of developments, rather than with the technology of administrative action. The leading characteristics of an institution are public trust, solid legitimacy, openness to the public, civic and political accountability, authenticity of
primary task, etc. This is precisely why an institution cannot be reduced to its formal administrative mechanisms. On the contrary – an institution serves to maintain the continuity of the political order, expressed first and foremost, and in a fundamental way, in the very idea of constitutional order.

The megarisk of institutional implosion is the leading idea of the present concept. It is the first concrete expression of the way in which a risk can be a national security risk.
4. GROUP OF HIGHEST PRIORITY RISKS

4.1. FINANCE AND THE ECONOMY

Context

In terms of Bulgaria’s economic situation, the coming decade will most probably be the “interesting times” from the proverbial Chinese curse. This decade will be rife with risk. Perhaps only some of the foreseeable risks will turn into actual events, but it would be reasonable to be prepared to deal with them.

Such preparation requires the identification of the basic kinds of economic risks the country faces, of their main drivers and mechanisms of unfolding, and of a criteria-based array of actions and plans to underwrite both the prevention of adverse developments and the necessary reactions if they actually occur.

In this analysis, the classification of potential risks is based on three fundamental dimensions. The first is the axis “internal-external”, i.e. the place of origin of possible risks, which may be engendered inside Bulgaria, but may also come from the outside, particularly from Bulgaria’s dominant economic partner, the European Union (EU). The second dimension is the location of risks, namely, whether they reside within given aspects of the current situation, or whether they lie within the very structure of the economy. The ways in which risks affect the economy and how their impact can be reduced both depend heavily on this distinction. The third dimension is the duration of the threat, namely – whether we speak about short-term or long-term risks.

Over a 2020 horizon, based on this coordinate system, the types of risks Bulgaria faces can be divided into eight groups, which vary from short-term, situational and internal risks to long-term, structural and external ones. Some of these contain a great variety of possible developments, while others appear less relevant to Bulgaria’s current position.

Business activities are an important aspect of social life and strongly influence the quality of social life and its defining characteristics. If business activities are disrupted, whether acutely or chronically, if they become unable to guarantee to people the growth of their real income, all other social systems, including the political one, can come under serious pressure. Reduced business activities and lower real income intensify existing conflicts in society and create conditions for the emergence of new ones.

Economic crises present both a direct risk, in so far as they imply a deterioration of living standards, and an indirect risk, because they inevitably create tensions in the fabric of society as a whole, and consequently, can engender and intensify other critical processes. On the other hand, economic crises have beneficial aspects, as the very fact of their occurrence pushes society to devise better ways of ordering its social interactions.
Risk Assessment

The major characteristics of Bulgaria’s economy are that it is a small, open, former communist country under a currency-board regime, which is a member of the UE still trying to catch up. The main consequence of these input characteristics is the great importance of attracting foreign capital. The second major consequence is Bulgaria’s inability to protect its domestic market from the pressure of foreign competition, including through manipulation of currency exchange rates. The third consequence is the high degree of economic and financial integration with the EU, a source of both positive and negative developments. Last but not least, Bulgaria’s economy possesses certain competitive advantages, such as cheap resources, but these will inevitably be gradually exhausted in the process of the country’s catching up with other EU members.

Given these basic characteristics of Bulgaria’s economy and the specific situation in Europe, as well as globally, in the beginning of the second decade of this century, certain of the risks outlined above are relevant.

The first type of risks are short-term, situational, and external. For example, the EU entering a long recession. This will mean new pressure on Bulgarian producers, who are already orientated towards exports mainly to the EU, significantly slower growth in Bulgaria, as well as, necessarily, a continuation of the painful restructuring in the business sector which is already under way and is taking many victims on the labour market. It will also mean stalling the flow of capital into the country at the current low level, and consequently, a need to finance capital formation predominantly through domestic savings; this will mean two things – the continuing sluggishness in domestic consumption and slower capital formation. The social expression of this would be slower growth in income and a depressed labour market for at least several more years.

The second type of risks are short-term, situational and internal. The main danger here concerns the deterioration of Bulgaria’s current economic situation, which may be brought about if a government decides to abandon its financial discipline and thus generate macroeconomic instability. Given the absence of a good reputation and good capability to issue debt on the international markets, if primary fiscal deficits are continuously maintained, accompanied by the inevitable gradual depletion of the fiscal buffer and of the opportunities for privatization, even small bumps in the servicing of Bulgaria’s public debt, such as the concentration of larger payments in 2013 and 2015, may cause a crisis in the government’s finances. This may, in its turn, infect the entire economy by provoking a collapse in confidence.

The third type of risks are short-term, structural and external. The catastrophic scenario here is a disintegration of the Eurozone (EZ) and the disintegration of the EU that would inevitably ensue. Relatively quickly, such an event would radically transform the structure of the global environment in which Bulgaria’s economic actors operate. There will develop fast processes of disintegration of business and commercial relationships, markets will disappear, credits will shrink, and very likely the infection from outside will spread into the Bulgarian financial system, exercising pressure on the currency regime. In terms of severity and magnitude, such a crisis in Bulgaria would be comparable to the crisis of the mid-1990s.
The fourth type are long-term, structural and external risks. They concern the EU’s and the EZ’s long-term inability to change the structure of the economic processes that inexorably lead the Union to a loss of competitiveness in the global context. One of these risks is the inability of EU and EZ countries to get their budgets under control. This will continue to cause the already well-known “crowding-out” of private investments, and to impede the process of capital formation, which will straggle behind that of global competitors. Another threat would be the inability and lack of preparation to deal with demographic challenges, which would lead to lack of resources for development. A third risk is the inability to reform the welfare state, accepted as the standard in the EU in the last two decades, but which the present crisis has exposed as a bankrupt system. This type of welfare state is not only incapable of generating long-term perspectives for business growth, but it has also proven itself to be a constant generator of crises. A fourth risk is the inability of European business actors to introduce substantial innovations of global significance, as has been the case for decades.

The fifth type of risks to Bulgaria concern long-term, structural, internal problems. At the moment, none of these is cause for immediate concern, but if these risks are not dealt with in time, they will impose themselves with greater and greater urgency. These are mostly problems with forming and maintaining Bulgaria’s human capital – i.e. they are related to birth rates, education and healthcare. All of these show predominantly negative dynamics, and in the long term, they will inevitably affect Bulgaria’s competitiveness, its productivity and so also the well-being of society as a whole. Also within this category are the risks related to the stability of the retirement pension system, which is unlikely to become a pressing issue by 2020, but this is precisely when opportunities to place the system on a solid basis may be missed. After that, such efforts would come too late. Also included here are risks related to the structural characteristics of the business environment, its attractiveness and ability to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as risks related to characteristics such as competitiveness on the domestic market, respect for the rules and the quality of business strategies.

Current Policies

The basic macrorisks to Bulgaria’s economy come from its main macroeconomic policies, including the monetary regime, the country’s fiscal position, and policies dealing with the basic factors of production: physical capital (infrastructure, the business environment), human capital (education, healthcare), social capital (legislation and the administration of justice), labour and the labour market.

Currently, the monetary regime is based on solid principles, it enjoys public confidence and disposes of relatively large reserves. It contributes significantly to the economy’s resilience in responding to internal and external shocks. After a decade of conservatism and after the crisis of 2008, the fiscal regime is characterized by constant primary deficits, by increased public debt and the gradual depletion of reserves. Currently, the country’s fiscal position no longer provides protection against risk, and the profile of the servicing of government debt is marked by the accumulation of risky moments in the next few years. Over all time horizons, the lack of a structural solution to the problem with the quasi deficit of the pension system additionally deteriorates the country’s ability to deal with risk, although over a 2020 horizon, it does not generate risk in itself.
The current labour policy places Bulgaria among the countries with a relatively flexible labour market, but the market’s ability to absorb shocks is limited, and in the last few years, it has shown symptoms of both overheating and depression.

The policies related to human and social capital do not propose the necessary reforms. The quality of Bulgaria’s human capital is declining, while the lack of clarity in the rules and the absence of quick and impartial application of property rights worsen the investment climate. In the long term, this will mean that Bulgaria will not have sufficient engines of economic growth, which certainly increases the risk that its competitive advantages gradually erode, making the economy vulnerable to even small shocks, as well as incapable of using favourable changes in the business environment to its benefit.

Risk Reduction

The basic macroeconomic policies carrying medium to long-term risks to the economy currently apply to the structural aspects of Bulgaria’s human and social capital. Certain weaknesses of the fiscal policy, increasing the likelihood of situational difficulties, may also be added here.

Reforms in the secondary and higher education systems are particularly important because they require time to begin to yield results. The reforms should aim to introduce incentives for participants to create a product of people with the necessary preparation and qualifications to meet the needs of the economy.

The reform in the healthcare system is also very important, particularly insofar as it affects the demographic development of the country. The goal should be a considerably increased efficiency of the system, which, accordingly, must provide more and better quality healthcare, while offering valid incentives to maintain the growth of its cost.

The reform in the domain of social capital has two main strands. The first is the administrative services offered to businesses. The administrative obstacles and various encumbrances in conducting business should be considerably lightened, while taking into account that the effect of low and simple taxes has probably been exhausted and a new significant flow of capital along these lines cannot be expected. The second strand is the reform in the judiciary system, particularly in the way it services business turnover by quick and effective application and fulfillment of contract obligations, as well as by improving the procedures for insolvent businesses leaving the market to ensure the best possible protection of creditor rights. In this domain likewise, there should be no delay, because the positive effects of any changes will take time to materialize.

Conclusion

Bulgaria is a small, open, former communist country, under a currency-board regime, which is trying to catch up with other members of the EU. In order to ensure Bulgaria’s future economic development, and create conditions allowing the country to deal with risks, it is of key importance to form new quality capital of all kinds: physical, human, and social. The lack of reforms in these spheres – education, healthcare, the administration of the business environment, and the administration of justice – diminishes the country’s capacity to
form capital, and so undermines the economy’s long-term growth potential, making it susceptible to external and internal risks, both situational and structural, and both in the long term and the short term.

To these fundamental weaknesses of current policies, we must add the exhaustion of the fiscal reserves accumulated in the past, and the lack of fiscal health guarantees in the form of sustained primary budget surpluses. This weakness, more and more visible, significantly increases the risk of a collapse in confidence in Bulgaria's macroeconomic environment.

4.2. ENERGY

Introduction

The energy sphere is widely acknowledged as a critical sphere of high political, economic and military risk. The emergence of new wealthy nations, combined with the limited nature of traditional energy resources, puts additional pressure on energy systems around the globe. One of the problems of energy supply in the modern world is also the changing definition of energy itself. Twentieth-century views are no longer applicable in the 21st century. That is why we shall examine both the problems related to traditional energy resources and the problems related to the modern political definition of energy.

Energy and National Security

So far, no significant oil or gas reserves have been found in Bulgaria. In contrast to exporting countries like Russia, low petrol and gas prices are good for Bulgaria, and high prices are bad. High carbon-based fuel prices diminish Bulgaria’s competitiveness and its economic stability. Being the EU member with the least energy efficient economy, Bulgaria is considerably more vulnerable to high and unstable international energy prices.

The other energy factor that poses a serious threat to national security is the security of the supply. In combination with other risk factors, a steep, unexpected rise in prices and disruptions in supply can push a given country or a group of countries beyond the tipping point in terms of stability.

Pursuing stable energy prices is often a factor in military interventions and the supply of fuel is frequently used as a lever in exerting political pressure internationally – for example, the 1973 Arab oil embargo or the gas supply cutoff during the Russian-Ukrainian crisis of 2009. In order to protect itself from such shocks, Bulgaria must build a stable energy system. In order for a country to build a stable energy system in the 21st century, however, energy must be thought beyond certain deeply embedded stereotypes.

The major risks to our energy sector come from the infrastructure and the prejudices at the basis of our habits of energy consumption. We believe that our energy security means steady imports of gas, nuclear reactors, fossil-fuel and hydroelectric power stations. We also believe that the only way to reduce the risks to our energy security is to diversify the gas supply. The controversy surrounding the Nabucco pipeline is an embodiment of this view. One school (Gerhard Schröder) claims that Europe’s energy security depends on Europe’s good relations with its main supplier (Russia), whereas the other school (Joschka Fischer) believes that Europe’s energy security depends on building
an alternative to the gas supplies from Russia. In other words, Europe’s energy security is often viewed within the seriously outdated paradigm we know so well from Bulgarian politics – that of “the Russophiles vs. the Russophobes.”

This paradigm makes sense, but it is also limited, as rooted as it is in the dynamics of the Cold War (and even in the 19th century). It fails to take into consideration the political and technological trends of the 21st century. It is almost like wondering whether Khrushchev was a good guy or a bad guy. Also, this paradigm is based on the concept of energy sovereignty – countries believe that the first question they need to ask is “Do we have oil?” With the advent of natural gas, the question was transformed into “Do we have gas?” In the case of Poland, the same question appears disguised as a statement: “we have coal.” And the same kind of statement forms the premises of the energy policy of the new European country Kosovo: “we have the largest reserve of lignite in Europe.”

The combination of unstable supplies, high and unpredictable prices on the international market of carbon-based fuels and an inadequate energy strategy can create a severe energy crisis, causing both a sudden shock (sharp increase in prices or sudden energy shortages) and a long-term crisis, inevitably entailing high energy expenditure, which, in its turn, would block Bulgaria’s adequate economic development, stall the process of convergence with European standards and doom the country to eternal low labour productivity. Such a model would also put heavy pressure on the levels of corruption in the country.

**At the Threshold of the 21st Century**

Bulgaria’s current energy policy is still in the 1970s: it’s as if the construction of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant has just began, nuclear energy is the latest advance in technology, and the energy supply from the Soviet Union seems to be guaranteed till the end of time. Forty years later, however, the energy landscape, both nationally and internationally, has changed. The future development trends in the energy sector have changed even more.

Bulgaria’s energy system has long lost its safeguard in the face of the now defunct Soviet Union. Bulgaria’s economy and consumption are growing. The country’s energy efficiency is extremely poor. The price of electricity is also low in comparison to European standards. There is no strategy for change. The plans for developing the energy sector comply with the requirements of the EU, but they do not go beyond the EU’s formal requirements.

Bulgaria is much more focused on building energy production capacities and the export of energy than it is on its internal stability and the efficient use of energy. The storage and transfer of energy are questions that receive very limited attention. The legal framework and the government’s participation are unpredictable, so no serious long-term investments are being encouraged.

Despite the fact that the country’s energy efficiency is slowly improving, the country’s economy wastes energy in a reckless manner, and deals with energy problems through crisis management, rather than long-term planning.

**The Energy Policy Inherited from the Cold War**

The country depends on one main energy supplier – Russia. There is no complex strategy for solving this problem. The idea of diversifying the supply offers only a partial solution.
Bulgaria has no energy strategy that takes into account price instability, the insecurity of the supply and the technological advances in renewable energy in the next ten years. For this reason, the political debate is still based on the erroneous conviction that nuclear and fossil-fuel energy are cheaper than, say, solar energy. This assumption does not take into consideration the trajectory of renewable energy prices and the accompanying externalities of conventional energy sources. Additionally, Bulgaria's energy strategy presupposes a mass introduction of gas for household consumption, which would lead to a strong long-term dependence on gas imports, and this – in the absence of corresponding measures for reducing energy consumption.

This national energy strategy will block the development of an independent national energy system based on efficiency, current technological trends and open, flexible, smart energy markets.

Such political short-sightedness can push Bulgaria into heavy energy dependence, energy poverty and loss of competitiveness.

**Five Premises for Bulgaria’s Energy Policy**

Bulgaria must build an energy strategy that is based – not solely on import and generation – but on the following five equally important groups of factors:

**Energy production**: apart from the traditional sources, production should include the entire spectrum of renewable energy sources. These should be considered not only from the point of view of their current and past cost, but also from the point of view of their projected cost in the future, the predictability of this cost, the security of the supply, as well as many other factors, which normally should engage the attention of a country’s government.

The second group of factors concerns **energy use** or energy efficiency. The accepted formula in this case is to equate the renovation of buildings to improve insulation with saved energy from the Belene nuclear power plant. The energy efficiency of the buildings, in its turn, could reduce other social risks – for example, risks related to the so-called energy poverty, which is traditionally defined as the percentage of people who spend more than 10% of their income on energy. Energy poverty in Bulgaria, which is times higher than that of other European countries, is a significant risk factor in terms of social instability.

The third group of factors concerns **the storage of energy**. This factor is familiar to every family. To have a gas lamp, candles or a flashlight in the pantry is precisely this type of risk management. But it extends far beyond the pantry. During the 2009 gas crisis, it became clear that Bulgaria does not have sufficient gas storage facilities. Energy needs to be stored not only as protection against such contingencies, but also to help manage variations in the production and consumption of energy.

The fourth group of energy factors has to do with **the transportation of energy**. We are entering the age of smart grids and super grids. To put it simply, energy today can be transferred and traded almost like information on the Internet. Super grids provide a perfectly realistic way for Bulgaria to acquire electricity from Morocco and Scotland, or to sell it to Poland and France. At the same time, smart grids and a decentralized energy model can make it possible for anybody to become an energy producer, consuming, buying, pro-
ducing and selling energy at the same time.

The fifth foundational prism is the international energy market. A stable energy system cannot exist without a clear notion of the market. Bulgaria must actively elaborate a vision and a strategy for the international electricity market, and not the gas and oil markets. In this strategy, the country should not occupy the position of a transit corridor, but the position of a producer and consumer.

Conclusion

Bulgaria must reappraise entirely its energy system through these five prisms, while assessing the energy risks to the country in the context of the future, and not the past. Only then will Bulgaria have a chance to achieve real energy security and independence, and would not rely on politically fragile contracts and sentimental, household or corruption factors.

4.3. CRIMINALIZATION

Context

Criminalization is a national security risk in its extreme forms, as non-conventional types of criminality with a developed capacity to become organized. This capacity, its materialization and practice can acquire a variety of forms. Some of these do not fall within the provisions of the Criminal Code, or do so with great difficulty. The risk of criminalization is related to the increased likelihood that crime develops a social form characterized by continuity over time, stability, structure, etc. Such criminality may affect national security in the sense of the present definition of security, namely, the stability / instability of institutions and the constitutional order.

Criminalization is a national security risk to Bulgaria because since the 1990s various forms and dynamics of coalescence between business, politics and crime can be observed. Depending on the degree of their merger, interaction, cooperation or direct identification, the risk changes in its structure or increases. This is also the characteristic form of criminalization as a security risk: it threatens the institutions and the constitutional order depending on the degree to which such symbioses have developed. In the boundary case, criminalization would replace the state and initiate the annihilation of the difference between what is legal and illegal; this would be the modern analogue to the Hobbesian “state of anarchy.”

Risk Assessment

The levels of conventional criminality in Bulgaria are high, but they are definitely not high enough to represent a security risk. Non-conventional criminality having the capacity to self-organize, however, is a risk to the national security. The commonly accepted term designates it as “organized crime”. But this term, related to the Criminal Code, is misleading. It significantly narrows the field of non-conventional forms of criminality that we are interested in. This is why we shall avoid any direct reference to the so-called “organized crime”,

in the common sense of the term. Security risks are related to and demand a larger notion of criminal organization.

“Organized crime”, in the widely used senses of the phrase, has its archetypal forms in organized banditry, organized gangs, all in all, in some variation of “gangsterism.” This basic form of non-conventional criminality is highly misleading: it suggests that the organized criminal process unfolds in the margins of society, that as strong as it may be, it remains marginal, because, on the whole, it is foreign to the social process. Such a supposition would be incorrect in the case of Bulgaria and other countries in Eastern Europe. In the context of these countries, we must accept a notion of criminal organization pointing to two types of criminal activity: the traditional one, involving organized criminal gangs and markets, and a second one which relates to the direct penetration and capture from the inside of public institutions. Between these two forms, there are nuances, overlaps and interactions.

The long-term security risk characteristic for Bulgaria is always a constellation of these two types. Accordingly, the entire register of non-conventional forms of criminality is of interest: from gangster organizations to more perfidious forms of capture of institutions and their transformation into control centres for criminal activity.

Bulgaria holds an unfavourable position among European countries in terms of “overt” criminal activities related to the organization of criminality. In comparison to the beginning of the democratic transition period, crime levels are lower. The phase of the quasi-military conflict between gangs has been overcome, and the violence has decreased. Nevertheless, the available data presents cause for concern. Many studies show that the organized prostitution market amounts 1 to 1.3 billion EUR, which is an alarming amount given the size of the country. The drug markets are estimated at 300-400 million BGN and this places drugs among Bulgaria’s largest economic sectors. VAT fraud is at a particularly high level: according to some estimations, it stands at ar. 700-800 BGN, and according to others, it reaches 1.5-1.8 billion BGN annually. Cigarette smuggling is considered to be an illegal business with a turnover of about 500 million BGN. These numbers, among others, show that annually there are between 3.5 and 5 billion BGN generated through illegal activities in Bulgaria. Bulgaria’s GDP for 2011 was about 75 billion, which means that organized criminality generates 1/15 or about 6-7% of the country’s GDP.

The other type of criminal activity related to the capture of institutions is difficult to measure. Its direct definition is the profit-driven criminalization of the political process in all its forms. The great risk here is the “hacking” of institutions and their transformation into instruments of criminal activity. In this process, the risk factor of “criminalization” is difficult, if not impossible, to manage in the sense of rational risk management of the kind applied in the energy, financial, environmental or public health sectors. Thus, at the political and institutional levels, criminalization acquires the dimensions of a megarisk, approaching the very definition of the megarisk as a collapse of national security.

The two forms of organization of criminality interact and enter in various symbiotic relationships. Crime organizations and their markets could not function without the protection of the state. What is more – in a country that has only recently transitioned from a dictatorial form of government, the emergence of
powerful criminal groups and markets happens either under the direct protec-
tion of political institutions or with their active cooperation, even under their
initiative. There are numerous examples to illustrate this.

**Current Policies**

The policies for counteracting and reducing crime have many flaws, which
have been exposed in the last two decades and are most probably here to stay
for a long period in the future.

1. Bulgaria has a low capacity to counteract non-conventional criminality.
The institutions responsible for reducing crime have no sufficient under-
standing of it. The levels of education on the issue are alarmingly low in
comparison with western countries. Modern criminology does not exist in
Bulgaria. The media often harm anti-criminal policies by overexposing the
sensational, spectacular aspects of this critical issue;

2. Bulgaria copies legislation from developed countries without having ac-
quired deeper understanding of the laws. On the whole, there is no suffi-
cient understanding of the purpose of introducing the entire non-traditional
legal platform to combat organized crime. The implementation of this un-
conventional legal instrument is going very slowly and has yielded little
result for the past ten years. It does not seem likely that the situation will
change in any radical way in the short term;

3. Bulgaria has no notion of the latest instruments for influencing the crime
process through social action. It does not develop preventive policies,
there is no indication that it has a good grasp of the approaches for
harm reduction, of the community approach, of the clear framework within
which crime is perceived as a security risk;

4. For an entire decade, Bulgaria has been developing policies of law en-
forcement centred on increased criminal justice policies. Such is the case
with the State Agency for National Security, the Specialized Court for
Organized Crime, the Agency BORKOR, the asset forfeiture law, etc. This
package focuses on repressing a criminal process already under way, but
its efficiency is dubious and it could not solve the long-term problems
with non-conventional criminality. In many cases, the very expansion of
the state administration to include large repressive powers can pose the
risk of increasing the levels of non-conventional criminality. Here also lies
the risk of creating a hidden parallel state related to the country’s security
services.

All current policies against crime aim at a type of non-conventional criminality
which, although important, is not the essential one in Bulgaria. They tackle
various forms of gangsterism, but they are designed in such a way as to
bypass the characteristic merger of politics, institutions, business and crime.

**Risk Reduction**

Bulgaria’s governments must begin to develop alternative approaches to non-
conventional criminality and moderate their own propensity for hard criminal
justice approaches.

1. Long-term policies aiming the decriminalization of resources essential to
the criminal world, such as prostitution, soft drugs and others, should be
developed. In the long term, a wider application of liberal regulatory regimes should be considered.

2. The state should invest in dramatically improving specialized and general education on the issues of crime. A new criminology should be developed at all levels – from the academic one, to structures of the non-government sector and programmes for continuing education.

3. Bulgaria should devise alternative approaches that relate more directly to crime as a security issue. Among such approaches are harm reduction, the community approach, the aforementioned decriminalization, etc. Rather than rely on penal policies, these approaches directly aim to increase the country’s social capacity to deal with the problem.

4. Bulgaria should begin to develop preventive policies. At the moment, this is not done because the country does not have the necessary governance culture and does not dispose of enough resources – prevention is expensive. In the long term, over the next 10-15 years, such policies should replace current penal policies and become dominant.

Conclusion

If future national security strategies fail to take into account the arguments outlined here and do not change the overall direction undertaken in current policies against crime – namely their reactive and penal character – the big problem with non-conventional criminality will not be solved, but merely postponed. New institutions will be created and restructured after a period of time; then new institutions will be created in their place, and so on. All of these actions have a mostly ritual sense: they will serve as material for reports to the EU administration. But they will not solve the problem of crime in a serious and durable manner. The direction pursued in the last 20 years must be changed in a calm, but determined and carefully studied manner.

4.4. SOCIAL COLLAPSE

Context

Traditionally, only extreme and unmanageable forms of social conflict are considered to constitute risks to the national security:

1. Direct confrontation between ethnic-based social groups, ethnic and demographic processes driven by increased social distances, as well as by processes of change in the social hierarchies and balances consolidated by lived experience;

2. Massive social unrest resulting from the incapacity of state institutions to limit the processes of deterioration of living standards and to ensure the political representation of the population, and the ensuing high likelihood of social collapse;

3. Political disintegration and collapse of the constitutional order as a result of ethnic conflicts and/or massive social unrest;

In this sense, the actual premises for social conflict are authority and legitimacy deficits, weak governance capacity, including capacity for managing differences.
Risk Assessment

Ethnic non-homogeneity and massive social protests have been traditional topics in Bulgaria’s security concepts and practices based on the realist notion of threats to the internal order, while these threats were usually seen as issuing from minority groups and communities, rather than actions on the part of the majority. Today, the sources of such threats are identified less with the behaviour of minorities, and rather with the changing balances of benefits and losses between competing groups and communities, and they include processes concerning the majority. In this respect, the likelihood of unmanageable social conflicts is definitely increasing, because of:

1. The deficit in authority, legitimacy and capacity in managing social balances and social policies at the national level, given the clearly expressed trend of growing social exclusion and diversification of marginalized groups. Joining the traditional group of the socially disadvantaged who are having difficulties participating in the labour market, we now see larger and larger groups of representatives of the middle-class: young people under 26, single mothers, elderly people, addicts, prostitutes or workers in the grey economy, the disabled, the “energy-poor”, people excluded from the banking system;

2. The deficit in power, authority and capacity at the level of the European Union, which has shown itself unable to deal with the challenges of the financial and economic crisis. The situation in the EU limits significantly the prospects for positive change and creates an unfavourable context for tackling either the processes of marginalization or the erosion of the middle class;

3. The deficit in power, authority and management instruments at a global level engenders global social protests of the Occupy Wall Street type in cities around Europe and America. The Occupy movement, the Arab spring and the Greek protests legitimized civil disobedience and protesting as logical and normal actions on a global scale. Over the medium term, the influence of global protest movements will likely visibly diminish: the Occupy movement is losing its social energy, the Arab spring has degraded into interior conflicts on a religious, tribal or political basis, the wave of Greek protests has run into a Greek depression.

The medium-term risk of social collapse, which society as a whole faces, and which threatens the country’s institutions with implosion, implying total social chaos, issues mainly from processes of growing marginalization that have proven unmanageable so far. The social exclusion of larger and larger groups of people is affecting more and more spheres: the economy, the market, politics, education, healthcare, etc.

The data for each of these spheres, both in Europe and Bulgaria, suggests that the gradual but durable exclusion of populations from the norms of well-being will continue to grow. About 10% of Europeans and about 30% of Bulgarians already live in conditions of serious material deprivation, in which people are unable to afford essential goods, such as a telephone or heating, crucial for leading a dignified life.

Communities, groups and individuals facing the threat of social exclusion are: ethnic minorities, the Roma, migrants, young people, women, the elderly,
households with dependents – single parents, unemployed, disabled people, children (the risk increases by 25% for children in large families and by 30% for children of single parents). Where children are concerned, their personal development, health and education are particularly affected. Children are exposed to a greater risk of marginalization, as they tend to enter a vicious circle maintained from generation to generation.

At the same time, new forms of precariousness, as well as particular cases of inequality (homelessness, energy poverty, financial exclusion (lack of access to basic banking services, large personal debt), disabled people or people with chronic illnesses), also lead to a gradual but durable (irreversible) marginalization. Former prisoners, prostitutes, human traffic victims, homosexuals also fall within these groups.

When specific conditions are present, these groups at risk can become generators of risk to society as a whole and to the state: this is the risk of disorder, the collapse of particular institutions, a state collapse, an implosion of democracy – the emergence of a military junta, etc. This risk is suggested also by eroding social solidarity and the atomization of the social fabric. In Bulgaria under a democratic regime, we can observe a growing process of atomization (“every man for himself”, and first and foremost for himself). In this sense, there is the potential for a swerve in the opposite direction, which may involve conflicts and socio-political upheavals.

In this respect, the groups at risk carry varying weight in terms of security. Some ethnic minorities, the Roma being the most numerous among them, are disproportionately affected by the phenomenon of social exclusion. Additionally, as a consequence of traditional and persistent discriminatory attitudes and of the country’s mono-ethnic education, the social distances between the Roma and Bulgarians are widening, thus significantly raising the risk of ethnic conflict.

Faced with growing social marginalization and institutional incapacity to deal with the problem, people tend to look for a culprit – either the political elites or ethnic minorities are blamed. The invention of an enemy already constitutes a premise for social conflict.

In the medium term, the following factors strongly contribute to and influence the spread of social exclusion:

1. The low level of awareness of risks to Bulgaria’s national security posed by growing marginalization. There is no adequate national debate about the issues related to social precariousness and social peace. The factor of mutual expansion or influence of the processes of impoverishment-desocialization-marginalization and of ethnic antagonism (an eloquent example of which is the case of Katunitza, among many others) has been ignored;

2. The scale and diversity of marginalization: first, more and more people are being drawn into and threatened by processes of exclusion; second, various spheres with their public institutions are being affected, such as the economy, education, healthcare, social agencies, government policies;

3. The application of inadequate or unproductive measures, the poor effectiveness of the methods, approaches and policies of Bulgaria’s institu-
More and more citizens are dropping out of schools, or leaving the healthcare system and the labour market, without being “picked up” and directed to functioning programmes for integration or reintegration. Public resources, both financial and human, are being wasted without any visible results.

The reason for this is the loss of confidence in the country’s institutions and in the governing capacity of public authorities in general. This, in turn, leads to other behaviours of social self-exclusion, examples of which are the groups of prostitutes, drug addicts and most probably, migrants. Such is also the profile of juvenile crime and violence.

Current Policies

At present, the policies related to marginalization are concentrated in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Apart from being insufficiently developed, poorly funded and poorly differentiated, these policies focus mainly on the labour market. Qualification and retraining programmes are in their very early stages. In the third place, we have social benefits for low-income families and the disabled. These three spheres exhaust the directions of current social policies.

Such policies generate risk not only because they are underdeveloped or insufficient, but also because of the absence of integration. The benefits a marginalized family receives should solve not only the primary issue of survival, but also the secondary one of leading a normal life in society. Mere physical survival in the absence of quality healthcare, legal and education rights and services cannot be expected to deal successfully with social exclusion. The political ignorance or indifference to this issue engenders nihilistic and anarchistic attitudes and actions. What is more, these latter could be channelled through speculation by parallel marginalized circles of the terrorist, criminal or paramilitary type.

Risk Reduction

In the medium term, Bulgaria needs to develop integrated programmes for curbing and reintegrating long-term socially excluded groups, and elaborate preventive strategies against marginalization. This presupposes analytical work at the level of institutions, and state and public policies for early identification of vulnerable groups.

In the case of the Roma, the elite will likely face a strategic choice and may need to abandon entirely its current policies for their integration into the political, economic, educational, healthcare and cultural spheres.

Future national security strategies should take into account the following recommendations:

1. To place the issue of the marginalization of populations (social exclusion) on the agenda;
2. To perceive marginalization as a social problem, and not an ethnic or a minority one;
3. To conduct a public debate on the issue;
4. To view marginalization as an integrated system. This implies the introduc-
tion of economic, judiciary, legal, healthcare, educational and psychosocial factors in the analysis of social exclusion. Following on that, to take into account the fact that social exclusion carries the potential risk of disintegration of the political system and of the institutional order.

**Conclusion**

The situation may degrade to social anarchy gradually, with destructive processes likely to start in the weakest regions of the country. A future national security strategy should take seriously the potential of social exclusion to become a high impact risk that can be taken control of only in its early stages. Every belated or partial action in this direction would have the opposite effect, and would intensify the public’s active discontent.

**4.5. THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE**

**Context**

In traditional national security concepts and strategies the international environment is a high priority risk sphere. This strategic orientation was preserved until the end of the Cold War, within the context of bloc opposition. Today, the international environment is a high priority risk for typical nation states – the US, China, Russia, to a lesser degree the United Kingdom, but also for countries like Turkey. These states independently pursue guarantees for their national security, understood in the traditional realist terms of territorial defence and international balance of power. They build up their respective defence capabilities, which include armies and intelligence services, and do not rely on others for the defence of their territory. Despite adhering to this principle, today even such countries concede that its overall importance has significantly diminished.

Bulgaria does not belong to this category. It neither needs to view its national security in the perspective of a risk of military attack on its territory, nor can it afford to. In this respect, of essential significance is Bulgaria’s membership in NATO, which in the foreseeable future will continue to act as a condition for its territorial integrity. Bulgaria will have a long-term participation in the delegation of functions within the Alliance.

The international environment, in general, and so also for an indefinite time in the future, will be characterized by high dynamics and low predictability. The processes in it do not present risks to Bulgaria’s territorial integrity, which benefits from sufficiently reliable international guarantees. They carry risks to the stability of the institutional order in so far as the country is not adequately prepared to deal with important changes in the trends of the last twenty years. In general, Bulgaria pursues policies that rely on the absence of great turbulence, upheavals or tectonic shifts in the international environment. Successive governments after 2000 have evolved their views of the country’s future development within a simplified coordinate system. According to this system, the conditions for Bulgaria’s national security are reduced to two main international regimes – NATO and the EU. This view is naïve and ignores the risks posed by the international sphere. Not only can these regimes undergo changes, but the country’s immediate regional environment also hides risks and ambiguities.
Risk Assessment

The long-term risk factors to Bulgaria's national security in the international context are the possibilities of considerable transformation of the EU and of a conflict in the Balkans.

In its 60 years of evolution, Europe's integration has gone through several stages of development. The initial projects for the unification of Europe were dominated by the idea of procuring guarantees for peace, avoiding a third world conflict on the continent, and creating a common market. The integration subsequently spread to other domains, and after 1990, especially after the Maastricht Treaty (1993), it became an ambitious project for a pan-European union. After the year 2000, the Union's big expansion was accompanied by growing centralization and increasingly influential federalist ideas. Despite the failure of the project for a European Constitution, the intention to achieve greater centralization and build the relevant institutions continued to grow stronger. As a result, there appeared quasi-federal structures, such as the common currency, the Euro, and the foreign policy administration, entrusted with the task of conducting a common foreign policy for the Union. With these and similar constructions, the EU reached a new stage and so also, a new limit point: it introduced centralized federal institutions without having ensured the basic political conditions for an authentic federation.

In the context of the global economic crisis, the risks related to this duality of the EU have become higher. There is now the possibility that the Union undergoes changes running against the wishes of the integration leaders, which can throw the federalization projects decades back into the past. In the foreseeable future, the possibilities are the following:

a) the abandonment of the common currency or the contraction of the Euro zone to some of the leading economies in Europe;

b) the formation of a central and a peripheral zone of integration and the division of EU member countries into categories;

In the longer term, greater changes are not excluded – for example, corrections in the central institutions of the EU; the complete abandonment of federalization ideas and projects; the appearance of a closed elite circle formed by the founding states; the creation of different zones under different regimes; the emergence of national policies departing from the Union's policies on basic issues, such as the free movement of persons, capitals and goods; stronger trends towards decentralization; significant deviations in national foreign policies from the moderate, averaged position of the Union; and so on.

It is difficult to foresee to what extent the EU will be able to deal with and control such risks in its attempt to pursue its integration after the Maastricht Treaty. The essential aspect of these processes, however, is this: compared to its earlier stages, the EU of today is a regional organization that is much less predictable in the medium term. Over a 10-15 year horizon, the possibility that it would continue to evolve smoothly along the lines of federalization and controlled expansion seems less and less realistic and acceptable. The likelihood that the EU may fall victim to premature integration and centralization, while failing to create the conditions for these to be sustained by the member states, is much higher.
The other source of significant risk to Bulgaria in the international environment are on-going processes in Southeast Europe. The formation of nations and their settlement, a process long finished in the rest of Europe, and to a large extent globally, is still at a primitive stage in some parts of the Balkans. A well-known conflict zone is Kosovo, because: first, Serbia is showing no willingness to simply accept the loss of its territory; second, it is still unclear if the new independent country will prove viable; and third, there’s the open question of Kosovo’s relations with Albania.

A much less discussed topic in this respect is Macedonia, which, however, constitutes a risk factor that may set in motion even more catastrophic chains of events across the entire region. First of all, Macedonia is in reality a two-nation state, and given the role of the national factor in the region, the likelihood that the country disintegrates into ethnic zones has not diminished over the last two decades. Second, Macedonia is an exceptionally poor country, with a very high level of unemployment. Third, Macedonia continues to have traditionally strained relations with its neighbours, and it is not clear how the tensions can be alleviated, despite the support of international organizations and foreign powers. These characteristics represent risk factors for a possible collapse of the Macedonian state in its present form. Macedonia itself is not in a position to do much about the issue, and as far as it is making any efforts, these are useless from a pragmatic point of view and even detrimental to its stabilization. In some sense, the country is left to follow its own natural course, and its evolution is characterized by a low level of predictability. Although Kosovo is widely viewed as the most dangerous conflict point in the Balkans, Macedonia is the real long-term time bomb.

Added to these two long-term risk factors in Bulgaria’s international environment, there are others that should be mentioned, although they do not appear to be of pressing concern at present. These are: unfavourable developments in the Near and Middle East, possible cataclysmic events in the region of the Black Sea, the situation in Russia, the evolution of Turkey, both domestically and in terms of its foreign policies.

Current Policies

Bulgaria is not prepared for adverse developments in either of these two risk areas – the transformation of the EU and conflicts in the Balkans. It must be acknowledged that, to a large extent, the rest of the world, the US and the states directly concerned in Europe in particular, are not sufficiently prepared either.

With respect to the EU, Bulgaria has been conducting a now traditional, rather naive policy. As late as 2012, quite a few years after acceding to full membership, Bulgaria still failed to grasp its position in the EU as a country with a specific place and specific functions, roles and opportunities. As a rule, Bulgaria’s governments continue to behave as they did before the country was accepted as a member – that is, as governments of a country that still needs to meet entry criteria. This behaviour has some justification – just like Romania, Bulgaria was not ready for accession to the EU. Nonetheless, once having become a member state, Bulgaria should observe the Union from the inside, with a heightened sensitivity to the new array of risks that a full member state faces. Top of the list of such risks is the possible disintegration of the Union, or, even likelier, a significant transformation of the current relationships within
it. With regard to this risk, Bulgaria a) has no ideas about the development of the EU itself, and b) has no ideas about policies outside of its membership in the EU. These scenarios are not being discussed; neither are they part of any political debates. Even if some abstract notion about them exists, the possible serious transformation of the EU is viewed as a natural phenomenon about whose likely occurrence Bulgaria simply keeps its fingers crossed.

The second area of security risks related to the Balkans is more accessible, more easily observable and familiar to Bulgarian governments. It must be underlined that Bulgaria cannot play a leading role in the management of potential great crises in the region – first, in the potential crisis with Macedonia, and also, in the potential crisis linked more broadly with the fate of the Albanian population in the region, including in Kosovo and Albania itself. One aspect of the issue concerns the implementation of preventive policies – precisely here Bulgaria’s resources are seriously limited. The other aspect concerns possible scenarios of critical developments in the directions outlined above; and more specifically, it poses the question: what would Bulgaria do in the context of yet another Balkan crisis? The country is not prepared for such a development, and has never been, as a matter of fact.

Risk Reduction

The two risk areas are interrelated in a peculiar manner: in order to reduce the risk of conflict in the region, the Western Balkans have to accede to the EU, and Bulgaria needs to do everything within its power to speed the process along. On the other hand, if very poor countries like Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo join the EU, this would increase the risk of collapse of the Union, a risk that is already high. In this respect, the discussion of risk reduction is generally quite complicated. The fact that there is no such discussion makes it even more complicated.

The ambiguity of the situation should be explicitly acknowledged. Successive, regularly reviewed national security strategies should monitor the dynamics of this ambiguity. Above all, since big strategic issues are at stake, risk reduction policies should become a matter of public discussion. An enlightened public debate, informed by radical critical thinking, should develop scenarios for possible tectonic transformations in these dimensions of the international environment, while relating them with the other risk factors mentioned above – namely, developments in the region of the Black Sea, in Russia, Turkey, the Near East, etc.
5. SECOND GROUP OF RISKS

5.1. EDUCATION

Context

The term “education” comprises all educational levels, including pre-school.

Risks in this sphere are generated by the low quality of Bulgaria’s basic education, which “produces” participants lacking the skills to compete on the labour market, as well as by the relation between poverty and lack of education. Bulgaria’s educational system fails to overcome social differences; it actually reproduces and intensifies them.

Risk Assessment

The programme for international student assessment PISA (2009)\(^1\) includes six levels of proficiency; students performing at the first level of proficiency or lower fall under the critical minimum. Such students are: in terms of reading proficiency, 41% of Bulgarian fifteen-year-olds; in mathematics – 47%, in science – 38.5%. If we consider the fact that students having dropped out of school before ninth grade have not been taken into account, then at least half of young Bulgarians of school age do not fulfil elementary proficiency requirements in basic disciplines. These are predominantly children of poor parents and students from small towns and villages.

The international civic and citizenship study ICCS (2010)\(^2\) shows that in terms of student achievement the gap between students of high social status and those of low social status is the greatest in comparison to all other participating countries. 37% of the students participating in the ICCS defined themselves as poor – these are also the students with the lowest achievement results. A 2011 study conducted jointly by the Open Society Institute and the World Bank\(^3\) established that 21% of Bulgarians live below the poverty line, and about 60% barely make ends meet. This means that, unless the relationship between low social status and low level of education is eliminated, the children of about 80% of Bulgaria’s citizens will be poorly educated.

The poor education of a large portion of Bulgarian citizens can lead to:

- Low-technology economy that lacks competitiveness, high levels of unemployment and consequently, deepening poverty;
- Budgetary imbalances – low revenue and possibly high social expenditure;
- The division of the country into a relatively rich centre or centres and poor peripheral areas with low levels of education and high unemployment;

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These, in their turn, can lead directly to situations of risk:

- Bankruptcy of the state if the model of low revenue – high social expenditure is imposed;

- Social riots and disorder if restrictive financial policy is pursued;

- A rise in crime – increased personal and property crime and solidified organized criminal networks;

- Possible acute conflicts between centre and periphery, as well as ethnic conflicts;

- A crisis of democracy – poorly educated and low-income citizens are easy victims of political manipulations and are susceptible to election fraud. If we also consider regionalization and the possible dependence of people on the local “boss”, in reality there will be no free elections in large parts of the country. In order to manage the situation, there will follow a return to an authoritarian regime, police and army surveillance, all of which will remain hidden behind the façade of something called “democracy”. This amounts to a serious crisis of the constitutional order – of the rule of law and human rights.

This is an internal, structural and long-term risk. Its likelihood is high.

Current Policies

Educational policies at the moment acknowledge the low quality of education in the country, while trying to improve it through a series of strategies and a new Education Law. But the state budget for education is the lowest in the EU – 3.4% of the country’s GDP – and is far from sufficient. The problem with the low quality of education cannot be solved without coordination between regional, social and educational policies.

Risk Reduction

There needs to be a commitment to regional, educational and social policies aiming to raise the level of household welfare in the country, which would increase the levels of education and create greater interest in investing in the educational system. There are two possibilities – the concentration of more resources in regional centres, including resources dedicated to education, or a more equitable allocation of resources to a large number of towns and villages. In order to improve the quality of education in Bulgaria, we would recommend the second option. Distance learning is not a viable solution at present, as poor and not very educated parents and people without personal computers are concerned. The model of regional-centre schools appears to be better.

In education: larger investments in pre-schools and secondary schools.

Pre-school education – to increase the number of kindergartens, which should form parts of educational projects, rather than simply offer a social service. To meet the requirement that all children of pre-school age attend pre-school classes. To increase the number of auxiliary teachers.
Secondary Education

To continue the policy whereby more regional-centre schools are created and smaller schools with poor results in external assessments are closed.

Differentiated funding of schools:

- Providing larger funding to schools with good results in external assessments;
- Ensuring the possibility of quick increase in funding when quality is improved;
- Higher remuneration for teachers working in problem schools or regional-centre schools as part of the programme for improving the quality of education in these schools.

5.2. HEALTHCARE

Context

The terms “healthcare” and “health system” are here understood to mean the organization of people, institutions and resources that deliver health care services to meet the needs of specific target groups of the population. Thus defined, healthcare in Bulgaria has never been systematically studied in the context of national security, nor has it been examined in view of the risk of a covert or overt biological attack.

Risk Assessment

In the medium term, the problems in the healthcare sector cannot engender a direct risk of social collapse or significant social conflict. More specific risks to the healthcare sphere may be engendered by the fact that Bulgaria is now an open country, allowing the freedom of movement of persons in the EU, and by the expected gradual increase in the flow of immigrants from third countries. This situation is traditionally associated with the risk of epidemics and a pandemic, which at this stage is estimated as a low probability risk but of potentially significant consequences, particularly when the following are taken into account:

1. Very dangerous infections that are not addressed in the immunization schedule;
2. The small number of infectionists in the country (the Society of Infectionists in Bulgarian has 200 members, of which 168 are active);
3. The institutional fragility of the healthcare authorities and anti-epidemic control programmes (network relationships, patronage, corruption);
4. Massive public dissatisfaction with the healthcare system and mass fears related to particularly dangerous infections and anything that can directly affect people’s health.

According to the World Health Report of 2000, Bulgaria’s healthcare system ranks 102<sup>rd</sup> in the world. Since 2000, the overall healthcare budget (the Minis-
try of Health and the National Health Insurance Fund) has been continuously growing in absolute terms, as a share of budget spending and percentage of the GDP. The increase in healthcare resources, however, has not lead to improvements in the sector. Various studies rank Bulgaria lowest among all EU countries according to many indicators, such as life expectancy, child mortality, and number of deaths by heart attack and stroke.

In 2010, 74,392 people died of cardiovascular diseases, that is, 67.5% of all deaths. Of these, 67,362 Bulgarians were age 60 or above. The people who died of heart attack or stroke in 2009 were 66% of all deaths, again the majority of these age 60 or above. This is the data of the National Centre for Public Health and Analysis at the Ministry of Health (MH). With these numbers, the country ranks first in the EU in cardiovascular mortality.

At the same time, the dissatisfaction of the population with health services is also growing, public scandals are more frequent, public criticism of the entire healthcare sphere is increasing, including criticism of sensitive areas such as maternity and emergency medical services.

Current Policies

The policy meant to rationalize the country’s healthcare network and its related National Health Map created social tensions and political opposition, also within the governing majority (for example, the hospitals in Gotse Delchev and Ivaylovgrad). This led to the preservation of the status quo in the existing network of health institutions, which alleviated social tensions, but exposed the health system to additional risk by failing to address its inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

The following should be added to this:

1. The National Health Insurance Fund’s deficit compared to patients’ high expectations;
2. The unreformed system of clinical pathways;
3. The underestimated cost of infectious diseases.

Risk Reduction

Bulgaria needs to make a strategic choice about its healthcare system reform: to preserve its current inefficient and ineffective network of hospitals, or rationalize the country’s Health Map. The choice is politically difficult, in so far as the first option will prove impossible in a situation of financial restrictions, while the second one may increase the risk of imbalances in regional development.

At this stage, relevant risks need not be addressed in themselves, but should be monitored in order to make sure that they do not rise up the scale to a higher category risk (e.g. medium likelihood and high impact). This monitoring should pay special attention to the accumulation of risks: healthcare system deficits that rise due to regional, ethnic, demographic and economic imbalances or that themselves cause such imbalances.

Bulgaria should not ignore the risk of bioterrorism, traditionally underestimated in the country’s national security strategies. This risk can be addressed more efficiently and effectively through the common system of public health, rather than through specialized defence investments.
Forecast

The forecast for the health sector is pessimistic for the following reasons:

1. The strategic choice was postponed through the entire transition period; the reform can be implemented only by a “government of experts” that will not weigh up unfavourable long-term political consequences;

2. Bulgarian infectionists have a weak lobby in the medical profession, the Ministry of Health and the National Health Insurance Fund;

3. The anti-epidemic and sanitary control in Roma slums is traditionally underestimated by the central and local authorities, as well as by the local population with its characteristic cultural views on health.

5.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Context

Until the end of the 20th century, Bulgaria’s national security strategies viewed regional imbalances as a risk sphere related to direct military threats to Bulgaria’s territory by neighbouring countries and to the danger of domestic separatist processes. Key to this militarized concept was the category of “endangered regions”: border territories that were both under an external threat of military intervention and endangered internally because of their ethnic profile. Accordingly, by the end of the 1970s, Bulgaria’s regional policy was elaborated in conjunction with the national defence policy. Border areas were constituted as closed territories of limited access, both externally and internally, and were meant to act as buffer zones against military intervention; hence, the infrastructure in these regions, particularly the road network, was never developed. Military towns with a limited military industry and its respective labour force were created.

In the beginning of the 1980s, due to migration and demographic processes, the concept of regional policy changed. Its defence objectives were preserved, but the internal threat acquired higher priority. The settlement of ethnic Turks in Southern border areas was forbidden; there were plans for their gradual dispersal and resettlement within the interior of the country; people with university degrees were encouraged to move to border areas in order to replace the local elite (Council of Ministers Decree N.22 / 1982). In the mid 1980s, Bulgarian Turks and Bulgarian Muslims were forced to change their identity. After that, the concept of “endangered regions” expanded in meaning, as well as geographically, to become “culturally endangered regions”, i.e. areas where identity policies were failing: the influence of Serbian music in Western Bulgaria, Romanian culture in the Northwest and the territories by the Danube, Greek music in Southern Bulgaria.

The threat paradigm remained the leading one until the end of the 20th century, when it was emancipated from the concept of defence policy and identity policies, and was reoriented towards values such as interregional equality, regional competitiveness, national growth, social and political stability.
Risk Assessment

In the perspective of these values, regional differences began to be seen as a regional problem, but thanks to Bulgaria’s membership in NATO and the EU, and the integration of Bulgarian Turks within the political, economic and administrative system, there are no longer serious arguments that the problem may directly engender significant risk to the national security.

Nevertheless, the processes in this domain should be monitored because they still present potential risks:

1. The big differences in income and levels of employment maintain constant migratory flows from economically weaker regions to the centres of growth, where they additionally complicate the conditions generating crime;

2. The continuous deterioration of the situation in weaker regions leads to a higher risk of social riots or of a social implosion;

3. Regions lagging behind in development are more susceptible to systemic criminalization – when illegitimate networks and groups take control over the local administration (Velingrad, Dupnitsa).

These three types of risk can increase when combined with other processes or risks: poverty; prostitution; ethnic, health and educational imbalances; cross-border crime (smuggling, drug trafficking, human trafficking); ethnic fears; healthcare.

Bulgaria’s accession to the EU and the implementation of Structural Funds in the country led to:

1. regional imbalances: the Northwest region of Bulgaria remains with the lowest GDP per capita in the entire EU;

2. differences between districts: Yambol and Sliven continue to lag behind in the Southeast region;

3. differences within districts: the municipalities of Malko Tarnovo and Sredets continue to lag behind in the district of Burgas;

4. differences between centre and periphery, between the country’s capital and the rest of the country, between cities and villages.

Current Policies

The current policies on regional imbalances have not changed conceptually since the adoption in 2000 of the National Plan for Regional Development, which envisioned development of the infrastructure (particularly motorways) and the opening up of border regions. The Regional Development operational programme is unsuccessfully trying to diversify regional policies. The major investments are in roads and urban infrastructure and urban environment, but the programme fails in its measures for improving regional competitiveness: investments in economic zones, access to energy sources, the development of tourism, innovation, and attracting investments. The policy of investment concentration in roads and motorways is in itself a risk: from an asset these become a liability, as they require maintenance funds (a problem in a situation of financial restrictions).
Risk Reduction

Bulgaria should make a strategic choice about its regional development: either develop in a more balanced manner, or allow the growth of spontaneous urbanization, which would lead to greater underdevelopment in large areas of the country.

This also implies choosing a set of instruments of development: decreasing the investments in infrastructure and focusing on regional competitiveness, the local economy and its ability to attract investments through influencing other factors for the improvement of the regions’ innovation potential: labour force, technology, financial capital, leadership.

Forecast

The forecast on the success of Bulgaria’s regional policy is pessimistic: in the medium term, regional imbalances will generate more risks than opportunities.

5.4. MIGRATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Context

In the present concept, “demographic processes” are understood as the variations in Bulgaria’s natural population growth and the changes in its profile as a result of birth, death, marriage and divorce rates. “Migration” refers to changes in mechanical population growth – the processes of emigration and immigration. A migrant is anyone who has lived outside of his or her native country for more than a year.

Risk Assessment

Traditionally, demographic processes viewed in terms of ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations, combined with the threat of a foreign military intervention, are seen as an internal risk to the constitutional order. In the medium term, these processes alone cannot lead to a demographic or social collapse, and they cannot directly engender significant risk to the national security. They impose certain limitations in the business sphere, but they constitute a premise for preserving the status quo, rather than for an economic catastrophe or a social implosion. Risks to the national security arise when demographic and migration processes interact with other risk spheres – economic, social, regional and ethnic imbalances, changes in the international situation, or a collapse in a given sector.

Demographic processes were seen as an issue of national security in the 1980s, when they concerned the demographic profile and identity of the Bulgarian Turks. In the 21st century, this is no longer a concern of national security policies and has survived only as a topic in the public discourse of radical political groups.

According to the census of early 2011, the population of Bulgaria shows negative natural and mechanical population growth: the population is decreasing, ageing, and emigrating. In the long term, there is a moderate increase in the proportion of the Roma population, while the Turkish population remains
steady; the higher natural growth of the Roma population combines with shorter life expectancy. According to a Ministry of Education study from 2012, Bulgarian is not the mother tongue of 48% of children enrolling in primary school.

The negative mechanical population growth is increasing significantly – people emigrating largely outnumber new people settling in the country; moreover, those leaving Bulgaria fall within the working-age category (25-49). These trends correlate with the education status of migrants: by 2020 the labour force of Bulgaria will have decreased sharply and will have lower levels of education. There will be a shortage of qualified specialists in spheres such as healthcare and education.

The data, however, contradicts the stereotypical fears of the risk of “turkization” or “tziganization”. Mass fear itself, which is linked to other risk factors, has risk potential, and so should be monitored to prevent it from rising to a higher category of risk.

This risk increases when combined with other risk spheres:

1. Economic imbalances – an ageing population exerts pressure on the retirement pension system and the budget;
2. Social imbalances – an ageing population leads to increased poverty and marginalization (the elderly will form the majority of the new poor);
3. Regional imbalances – the processes of ageing are strongest in the weakest regions and are negligible in the country’s capital;
4. Imbalances in the healthcare system – the elderly are the biggest consumers of health services (while contributing the least);
5. Ethnic imbalances – the positive growth of the Roma population as opposed to the negative population growth and the ageing of the population, particularly in weaker regions.

**Current Policies**

The specific policy addressing the country’s demographic problems is limited to modest financial instruments for promoting higher birth rates, without positive results. There are certain accomplishments in the field of child mortality, which in 2011 was at its lowest since 1989 (but this is happening against the background of lower birth rates).

There are no significant problems in the legal framework of migration policies. Our anti-discrimination law has been evaluated as one of the best in Europe. But the Migrant Integration Policy Index MIPEX of 2010 ranks the country 26th out of 31 countries, particularly in terms of education opportunities for immigrants (we rank 30th); restricted access to the labour market (last); unregulated political participation, and difficulties in acquiring Bulgarian citizenship.

**Risk Reduction**

Bulgaria must make choices about the following:

1. finding an effective and efficient financial instrument for the promotion of higher birth rates;
2. raising significantly the retirement age, which, however, would require de-
3. creating policies for the “importation” of highly qualified immigrants, simplifying the procedure for acquiring Bulgarian citizenship; facilitating the access to Bulgaria’s labour market for immigrants, restructuring the educational system so as to make it more open to foreign students.

There should be particular solutions of how to deal with the accumulation and mutual increase of risks related to “poor Roma groups with positive population growth who form the majority in certain areas in underdeveloped regions”.

Forecast

The forecast is pessimistic because:

1. new tax burdens require political decisions;
2. a higher retirement age contradicts the relatively low life expectancy in the country;
3. the integration of the Roma and immigrant populations requires time, sufficient means and a strong administration, none of which Bulgaria has at the moment.

5.5. THE ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

The natural environment exerts a strong influence on the quality of life, people’s health, life expectancy and the country’s economic development. The growth of the country’s population, but even more so its growing wealth, the structure of its economy, the irrational or uncoordinated management of Bulgaria’s natural assets, combined with the effects of climate change, can lead to significant stress being placed on the country’s social and economic equilibrium. Both the state and society as a whole need to be politically, administratively and technically equipped to react adequately to ecological stress, including extreme natural phenomena.

The Environment and National Security

“The commons” of Bulgaria are only partially protected. Air pollution in some Bulgarian cities largely exceeds all international norms. The aggregate effect of the country’s industry, the transport system, the use of solid fuels for heating, the inability of many municipalities to deal with the increasing amounts of waste, the scarcity and poor quality of the water, and the ecologically-unfriendly use of soil water lead not only to an environmentally unsustainable economy, but also to economic and social instability. Industrial pollution is often cross-border pollution and can lead to international tensions.

In 2011, the UN Security Council formally acknowledged that climate change constitutes a significant security risk. All climate change models predict greater droughts for the Balkans. Water scarcities and extreme climate events could have catastrophic consequences for the country, regardless of whether they are caused by global or cyclical climate change. Climate change will also
lead to climate refugees and conflicts, which would exercise external pressure on the country.

A serious risk to the national security is also posed by the unpredictability of environmental disasters, by the likelihood of their occurring simultaneously or together with other stress situations, as well as by the accumulation of risks coupled with political and technical incapacity for adequate response.

**Natural Resources**

The disintegration of the communist regime industry led to a sharp decrease in environmental pollution. The economic crisis after 2008 has had a similar temporary effect. Such developments are not the result of policies, but of historical incidents. The disintegration of the heavy industry was compensated by the increase in transportation, and the overall increase in wealth and consumption.

Bulgaria is a poor and not very densely populated country. Every Bulgarian citizen “has” a relatively large share of the country’s natural resources, which poverty prevents him or her from polluting intensively. A larger share of natural resources, however, translates into weaker social and political pressure for systematic care for the environment.

Individual romantic attitudes to Bulgaria’s natural resources are a problem when they replace collective economic ones, given that the exploitation of the natural resources does not enter the calculation of the cost of products. This lack of correlation continuously destroys the economic value of natural resources and is harmful not only for the environment, but also for business in general and people’s health. The low labour productivity and low energy efficiency of Bulgaria’s economy also lead to disproportionately intensive exploitation of natural resources. A third problem, which is a systemic one and is related to many other spheres, is the lack of public consultation and debate on the value of the environment. To a large degree, it was precisely the lack of public participation that led to the mass protests against the Forest Act in the summer of 2012.

**Current Policies**

Bulgaria applies a broad range of environmental regulations imposed by its membership in the EU. This approach provides partial protection. The country does not have a market mechanism to guarantee real compensation for damages. This policy, for instance, gives rise to the illusion that coal energy is the cheapest, but if health and environmental damages from burning lignite are included in the price per kilowatt hour, the just market price would rise significantly. Outside of the requirements of the EU, there are no consistent national policies to view the country’s natural resources within a long-term perspective. The risks from such a passive political approach are considerable. It increases the likelihood of environmental disasters and limits the capacity to mitigate their consequences. Bulgaria’s passive political ecology also has a negative demographic effect, particularly on the high-productivity professional middle class.

Currently, the state’s capacity to deal with extreme natural events is minimal, and it is inadequate both in terms of budget and institutional organization. In the last few decades, the economic damage caused by floods, forest fires, heat waves, droughts and other extreme natural or climate-related events is
considerably larger than damage caused by military conflicts. In the next decade, this trend will likely grow. The Bulgarian army, however, is still being trained for rather improbable military conflicts, while disregarding obvious natural hazards.

The inadequacy of Bulgaria’s environmental institutions dooms the country to gradual economic and social disintegration, which, if suddenly combined with other risks, may lead to an economic and social collapse.

**Future Policies**

The environment should be treated as a long-term and potentially exhaustible common economic and social asset:

- The effective use of natural resources should be defined as an indisputable national political priority, and not merely a matter of complying with external regulations;
- The environment and its condition in the future should be economized, and environmental damages and risks should be subject to valuation and be adequately recompensed;
- Environmental risks to national security should be directly addressed in the country’s military strategy and Bulgaria should be prepared to respond to them;
- Ecology should be “de-institutionalized” and should become an organic part of all national institutions, not only one ministry acting as an external control body.

**5.6. POVERTY**

**Context**

The notion of poverty is laden with many and various meanings, each of which can evoke relatively strong emotions and heated speech. On the other hand, it is proverbially difficult to give poverty an analytically useful definition. At the moment, there exist at least three different methods for measuring poverty. The first one is absolute poverty, which measures what portion of the population lives under a globally agreed upon level of material security. The second is relative poverty in the context of a specific country, where the line of poverty corresponds to a percentage of the average income in the country. The third method, currently used in the EU, observes the category of people “at risk of poverty or social exclusion” and uses different methodological instruments.

**Risk Assessment**

Regarding the risks to Bulgaria over a 10-15 year horizon, it is essential not only to identify and measure the characteristics of poverty in the country, but also to take into account the psychological experience of poverty and impoverishment, independent of actual material status. Such experience may lead to stronger social energies and processes than objectively measured poverty.

Irrespective of the method used, there are several characteristics of poverty in
Bulgaria that seem well established.

First, we have relatively deep poverty, and accordingly, the poor in Bulgaria live considerably below “average” material standards.

Second, the available data on poverty and on income inequality shows that there has been a drop in the overall level of poverty in the country in the years following Bulgaria’s accession to the EU.

Third and most important characteristic, to an extent related to the first one, is that poverty in Bulgaria is very unequally distributed in society in terms of age, geographical region, education and ethnicity.

A basic characteristic of this poverty profile is that it creates individuals who are durably unable to compete on the labour market, whose capacity to contribute to society and the economy is very limited, and who depend on social redistribution of generated national income as their sole life strategy. This group of people continuously fails to meet the requirements for adequate social inclusion, which range from verbal expression and communication skills to specific qualifications for the modern labour market.

Another important characteristic of the country’s poverty profile is that currently the poor are not able to generate significant social processes, in so far as they are predominantly people of inactive age (the young or the elderly) and with relatively low levels of education and integration into social networks.

As mentioned above, a particularly important aspect of poverty in Bulgaria, independent of its objectively measured levels and depth in terms of material security, is the feeling of being poor and becoming impoverished regardless of objective processes. This subjective perception, registered by all surveys and studies on poverty and personal security, can combine with other processes and serve as a catalyst for social developments containing risk.

These two basic characteristics of Bulgaria’s poverty profile suggest concrete possibilities for risky developments of the situation in the medium term and long terms, and both with regard to the economy and the political processes in the country.

From an economic point of view, the main risk is that the strong concentration of poverty in particular groups of the population, especially with regard to new young members of these groups, can deepen the gap between them and the most basic requirements the labour force has to meet in a modern economy. Thus, it will become impossible to fully integrate these groups into society and the economy at a moment when the ongoing demographic processes and the problems in the educational system will cause a shortage in new qualified workers. Such a process can seriously impede and even block the objective capacity of Bulgarian society to develop or even reproduce itself economically.

Politically, the main risk is that through job losses the current economic crisis may push socially more active groups of middle-aged men with some level of education and certain social capital into the groups at risk of marginalization. The threat of marginalization is very likely to make these men politically active, while their political rhetoric may prove highly effective thanks to dominant subjective perceptions of poverty and impoverishment. The addition of this profile to the groups at risk of marginalization may seriously radicalize the political discourse in the country in the direction of redistribution through the state in
order to counteract the process of marginalization and offer an alternative to the labour market, in which this group would likely be increasingly unable to participate. Such redistribution would happen at the expense of active employment and capital, both of which will react negatively, increasing the potential of conflict in the political system.

**Future Policies**

From this point of view, in order to avoid the negative economic and political developments related to poverty, two types of policies are necessary. The first one should address the labour market in the broadest sense – from education and training to removing the obstacles which block incentives for employers to create new jobs. The policy should aim to diminish the number of people who lose their job and are unable to find a new one for an extended period of time. The second policy needs to address social integration as a whole and in particular, integration into the labour market for the population groups already marginalized or in the process of being marginalized, with a special emphasis on young people.

**5.7. MASS FEARS**

**Context**

In the present concept, mass fear is understood as a conscious or unconscious anxiety that structurally defines behaviours and attitudes in a given society.

Mass fears have a hidden, erosive, long-term influence over the indicators of social cohesion and social resilience.

Empirical studies and their comparative analysis for the years 2006-2008/9 and 2011 show that Bulgarian society is a low-trust society.

In the last 22 years, the national and international living environment of Bulgarians has changed radically.

For a second time (after 1878) Bulgaria is entering modernity. The average person in Bulgaria experiences a loss of identity, but also a greater readiness to be socially active.

No acute processes of social and political alienation can be observed in the country. The reason to consider mass fear as a risk factor in Bulgaria is the durable and steadily developing trend of increasing perceptions of life in Bulgarian society as a life in which a citizen’s individual behaviour has no impact on the things that are important to them.

All of the above outlined characteristics can lead to a revolution, riots, civil disobedience, social apathy, social collapse, all of which may threaten the institutional order. Another possible scenario for the destabilization of social order

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4 The data comes from the two studies, representative for the adult population of Bulgaria, within the common methodological framework of the European Social Survey (ESS); first, over time, the findings about Bulgaria from 2006 in comparison to those of 2009; and second, in an international context, in comparison to other EU countries. The data from the two publications of European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) has been published on this website: www.eurofound.eu
posits that increased individual vulnerability and the atomization of collective perceptions can become the object of manipulation on the part of terrorist or separatist para-ideologies.

**Risk Assessment**

Mass fears concern both individual security and social security or the possibility that society may stop functioning.

Before we examine the different types of mass fears in Bulgaria, we have to note that their one common characteristic is the hyperbolic presentation or overexposure of real dangers (and facts), which is precisely the reason why the disastrously low levels of trust in Bulgaria are based on the “fear” factor. As an example, we can point to the study quoted above, according to which Bulgarians fear being robbed or assaulted to a degree dramatically higher than citizens of countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Great Britain, Norway and Sweden, despite that fact that the citizens of these countries have been subject to robbery and assault much more often than Bulgarians. The citizens of these countries, however, place great trust in their basic national institutions responsible for safeguarding social order (the police and the justice system), and so feel much more personally secure.

The fear of starvation and the fear of unemployment are the strongest fears of Bulgarians. After these comes the fear of rising prices, of being robbed and assaulted, of Roma incursions and ethnic Turks, and of foreign terrorist attack.

These typical fears could be summed up in the following manner:

- Fear that state institutions are not working properly;
- Fear that one has no protection when in danger;
- Fear that one’s children may stay in the country;
- Fear that the country is becoming depopulated and will be overtaken by minorities;
- Fear of helplessness in old age and when ill;
- Fear of change, of differences, of the other;

The impact of fears:

- The continuity between generations is broken;
- There is refusal to participate in the collective – social or political – order;
- Secondary organized networks – economic, criminal and so on – emerge.

**Current Policies**

There are no policies directly addressing mass fears.

The paradox of mass fears is that, beyond a certain point, they become independent of the factors generating them, and so are difficult to curb through the conditions at their source (social trust, the political system, the legislative and executive powers). Fears tend to become autonomous, intensify one another and reach mass proportions.
Counteracting mass fears is a long process and is the object of indirect policies.

**Risk Reduction**

Mass fears are generated in an atomized society, producing secondary mass dissemination of a hysterical, irrational type. In the long term, over the next 10-20 years, and on the condition that life in the country does not improve, the trend indicates that the population will be pauperized both in its national and in its international environment. This would amount to an acute crisis of the social and political integration of society, in which corruption networks and terrorist networks of the starfish model can prosper. The starfish model implies an organization of a new type, which does not have a leader; such organizations are Al-Qaeda or the global network iMule.
6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we shall outline three characteristics of national security risk reduction policies.

6.1. THE ACCUMULATION OF RISKS

In the first place, it needs to be taken into account that national security risks increase mutually, they accumulate, overlap, combine and so forth. Precisely in the interplay of risks, their capacity to become a megarisk, i.e. a risk to the constitutional order, is most strongly manifest.

Every future national security strategy should be orientated towards a) specific risks and b) their interaction. There is no point in devising lists of risks for national security strategies which examine risks analytically (something necessary in order to define them) but which, once the question of risk reduction has been raised, leave the risks analytically discrete.

A given risk is highly unlikely to act in isolation, but it is even more unlikely that a given risk – by itself – can become a megarisk to the constitutional order. In the recent history of Bulgaria, there have been a couple of such cases, but on closer examination, the situation appears different. For example, the financial crisis and the hyperinflation of 1996-1997 provoked street riots, which overthrew the government and caused serious changes; only after these changes did the transition of Bulgaria begin, with a delay of 7-8 years.

On the one hand, however, this is what one could observe on the surface – namely, hyperinflation, the collapse of the banking and financial systems, and the annihilation of people’s savings. Below this surface lay processes which were not so direct and brutal, but which led to the inflation crisis. These processes remained hidden and have not been well analyzed to this day.

On the other hand, even hyperinflation and the collapse of the financial system did not cause a disruption of the constitutional order. All in all, this acutest of crises after 1990 was overcome with the help of the available institutional means and remained within the then existent constitutional order. In other words, even in such a boundary state, the megarisk as a single catastrophic event did not actually occur. It requires no great ingenuity, however, to imagine a state of anarchy in that peculiar period.

These characteristics are essential to the present concept, because they carry implications for Bulgaria’s security policies:

First, the hidden accumulation of risks, interactions, mutual increases, and the interplay of risk factors is of utmost importance. It is precisely this kind of dynamics that must become the object of observation, assessment, and, where possible, the focus of policies.

Second, in future strategies and the planned policies of these strategies, the megarisk of implosion of the institutions should be viewed as a direction, an orientation. Just because this megarisk may not materialize and because we believe with some kind of primitive trust that a state of anarchy would never
prevail, let alone become durable, it does not mean that the risk should be underestimated.

Third, even a partial approximation to the “event of megarisk” has its price, sometimes a high price. The arbitrary interaction of risks may not lead directly to an institutional collapse, but it may lead to a partial paralysis, to apparent functioning which, however, is devoid of content and does not yield results.

6.2. THE PARADOX OF THE MEGARISK

The present concept contains a paradox. According to the concept, the megarisk to national security is the collapse of the country’s institutions. At the same time, in as much as it provides orientation for future strategies and for policies based on these strategies, the concept relies precisely on the institutions to reduce the risks to national security. Thus, the megarisk and the instruments for its reduction coincide.

We should not see anything peculiar or out of the ordinary in this state of affairs. The risk of collapse of the constitutional order cannot be reduced with instruments different from the instruments the constitutional order itself provides. If the risk is managed by extraconstitutional means, this would signify that we already have a state of collapse.

In this sense, the coincidence of risk and policies for its reduction is a normal expression of the most fundamental characteristic of the constitutional state, of an essential premise – its immanent reflexivity, its self-referentiality. The constitutional state does not rely on providential resources, and because of its secular nature, it undertakes to solve its crises with the help of the resources it itself builds.

Attempts to abandon this reflexive duality can be made, but the price would be the abandonment of the constitutional state and the very spirit of constitutionalism. In this sense, Carl Schmidt’s idea of the Reichspräsident, for example, as a prime guarantor of the constitution is unacceptable. Contemporary forms of internal nationalist consolidation and the expansion of the nationalist idea, both of which imply degrees of suspension of rights, are also excluded as normative ideas.

Apart from being at odds with the constitutional idea, such attempts to procure extraconstitutional instruments to stabilize the constitutional order or to recover its resilience after a crisis are usually ineffective. They open the road to dictatorship, placing at the head of the state the saviour of order (the Reichspräsident in the case of Schmidt), and dictatorship, even if established by traditional democratic means – by the power of the majority – remains in contradiction with the idea of constitutionalism.

This peculiarity could be observed throughout the 20th century, for example, in Latin American countries. Alternatively – and this is something that typically accompanies such political revolutions – the attempt to find a single solution to this apparent paradox leads to profoundly corrupted regimes, such as the communist regimes of the same period. Then, society usually, though not always, enters an even more serious crisis. In the case which is the object of the present concept, such possibilities are definitively excluded.
These considerations suggest that the paradox must be approached pragmatically, using the terminology of the present concept, i.e. with risk reduction as an objective. In order for the institutions to be reliable instruments of risk reduction, they must not only be characterized by administrative and technical rationality, but also be a powerful focus of public trust; in other words, they have to be legitimate in the traditional sense of the word. To an extent, this constitutes their higher political task – to function in such a way as not to corrode the trust lying at the basis of their creation.

This state of affairs implies that a general, permanent solution to the potential conflict of self-referentiality (the coincidence of risk and policies for its reduction) does not exist. On the contrary, there exist, unfolding over time, certain dynamics or forms for its solution, for its continuous solution, over and over again.

Ultimately, what our concept suggests, to paraphrase a famous thought from the late European modernity, is this: the constitutional order, and hence also the network of its institutions, take it upon themselves to care for their own health. This is the message of the present concept of national security.

6.3. GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Preventive policies are the privilege of rich and prosperous countries. Bulgaria is the poorest country in the European Union and this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Given such conditions, the deployment/expansion of risk reduction policies does not appear realistic, because the country lacks sufficient resources.

Nevertheless, the national security sphere needs to begin to develop in the direction outlined in the present concept. Bulgaria’s national security policies must:

1. definitively abandon concepts related to the notion of a foreign enemy, military capability and territorial defence;
2. expand the narrow understanding of those security institutions that play a direct role in safeguarding order;
3. develop in accordance with the modern notion of risk society, where risk constitutes an internal state of the social process;
4. tackle the great risks to the long-term stability of the institutions and the constitutional order;
5. be based on continuous observation and assessment of the interplay of risks within a broad social context, and more specifically:
   • monitor the accumulation of risks;
   • elaborate scenarios for developments leading to tipping points and collapse;
   • continuously assess the likelihood of reaching a threshold in stability.