identity

by Ivanka Mavrodieva

Abstract:

Identity – European Identity

During the last 30 years many terms from the past Communist ideology have been gradually substituted with new terms/ones used by Bulgarian politicians, statesmen, MPs after 1990 and by MEPs after 2007. The topic 'European identity' has been displayed on some different levels and some of them are that of rhetoric, media, official state documents, etc. European identity has been displayed more clearly and tolerantly, and this is a result of the rationalization and realization of the social, political and communication roles of the Bulgarian politicians, statesmen, NGOs, media and social networks. European identity has been perceived by Bulgarians ambiguously in the last decade. On the one hand, some groups of the Bulgarian population accept the advantages of Bulgaria's EU membership, including travel, work, study, etc. On the other, some are frustrated with the EU bureaucracy. More and more Bulgarians are becoming aware of European identity as a contribution of Bulgarian cultural and spiritual heritage.

През последните 30 години много термини от миналото на комунистическата идеология бяха постепенно заменени с нови термини, използвани от българските политици, държавници, депутати след 1990 г. и от евродепутатите след 2007 г. Темата "европейска идентичност" е показвана на няколко различни нива, като някои от тях са тези на реториката, медиите, официалните държавни документи и др. Европейската идентичност е показвана по-ясно и това е резултат от рационализирането и осъзнаването на социалните, политическите и комуникационните роли на българските политици, държавници, неправителствени организации, медии и социални мрежи. През последното десетилетие европейската идентичност се възприема неоднозначно от българите. От една страна, някои групи от българското население приемат предимствата на членството на България в ЕС, включително пътуването, работата, обучението и др. От друга страна, някои са разочаровани от бюрокрацията на ЕС. Все повече българи осъзнават европейската идентичност като принос към българското културно и духовно наследство.

Etymology:

More infromation about the term is presented on the site: "The meaning of "European identity" today, 11 April 2017, https://classe-internationale.com/2017/04/11/the-meaning-of-european-identity-today-i/

Cultural specificity:

Zeliyo Zhelev was the first Bulgarian president who won in free and democratic elections in 1992. Zhelev/He is the first leader of the Union of Democratic Fources (UDF) and he strongly supported the country's integration with the EU. He tended to display thematic or chronological consistency and, when making conclusions, he included new terms in his speeches combining European integration and our integration in NATO giving his preference to terms like "*Euro-Atlantic integration*".

The prime minister Jean Videnov (1995-1997) used the same term "*Euro-Atlantic structures"*. He said, "*Bulgaria's associate membership of the European Union, effective as of February 1, is an important step to the next objective - full EU membership*". (February 3-th 1995)

The president Petar Stoyanov (1997-2001) used the terms *European integration of Bulgaria, European civilization* and *civilizing*, *the contribution of Bulgaria to the European cultural heritage, the old European democracies*, *civil society* and *European political and democratic traditions* etc.

Nickolay Mladenov from the UDF presents sceptical position: "Bulgaria as a small country does not have any interest to shift responsibilities to the European institutions and to rely upon entirely international institutions where the role of

small countries will be reduced. Bulgaria has no interest of accepting *Europe in two speeds".*

Bulgarian citizens accept the Europe identity in other ways. Some Bulgarian citizens present their sceptical opinion and negative evaluation and they say that Bulgaria is in the European home or house but the place of Bulgaria is in the b*asement, larder, yard, lumber room,* and *cupboard* but not in the normal living space of the flat. The meaning is that Bulgaria does not have equal place in the EU and its secondary role as a servant is deserved.

Problematization:

The concept of European identity is a complex construct which includes social and psychological elements. European identity demands the process of building the collective identity and the sense of affiliation of the EU in parallel with the national identity. Simultaneously, the European identity insists on a unification, association and communication around the basic idea, universal values. It is reasonable to conclude that the process is uneven in the countries which are members of the EU. At the same time the concept requires a lot of efforts and activities to involve the people in the process and build a personal sense of European identity.

The theoretical clarification of the concept "European identity" includes great number of attempts and surveys. Simultaneously, "European identity" is intricate and multipolar, it has – as pointed above – geographical, political and civil manifestations, it includes economic and legal phenomena, cultural and educational appearances. (Mavrodieva 2013)

Communication strategies:

The European identity is presented in the contemporary Bulgarian language trough new terms and words. The terminology is enlarged gradually, the official institutional language is enriched permanently and the thesaurus is updated immediately after the announcement of each new decision of the EU and as a result of the necessity to inform the civic society about every decision, law, program, project and policy of the EU. The Bulgarian state institutions introduce the terms and notions. During the first decade after 1990 most new words sounded abstract, for example: *membership in the EU, institutions of the EU, European Parliament, European Commission, European Court etc*. In 2007 and 2011 Bulgarian citizens took part in two elections for the representatives in the European Parliament or EMPs. The Bulgarian language includes the terms and notions concerning the new positions: *Europe commissar* or *eurocommissar* and *European MP* (EMP) or *eurodeputy*. The terms *eurocrat, eurocracy,* and *euro bureaucracy* entered our vocabulary very fast and they have become part of the modern Bulgarian language. The nominative function of language dominates in the laws and state official documents. Media publications consist of words playing denotative or expressive function. The politicians, journalists and citizens use the terms *euroskeptics, eurooptimists* etc. The derivation follows a stable model where the compound words combine as their first element. For example, the adjective "European" or the short version "euro" as their second element a noun. Another group includes combinations of words naming political processes and traditions and at the same time the positive expression establishes good opportunities to compare Bulgaria with the ether European countries. The words and phrases *"old democracies in Europe", "old European countries", "European democratic traditions", "European parliamentary traditions"* display the aim to follow the positive socio-political tendencies in Europe. The Bulgarian politicians use metaphorical language where the common feature is that of the image which is easily encoded verbally because the metaphors are fossilized or 'dead' and they have lost their figurative meaning. These combinations of words have a positive connotation: *„European home ", "European family ", „big European family ", "new member of the European family", „European language family", "European language portfolio" „European language frame", "linguistic diversity in Europe"* or *"European linguistic diversity".* The European projects combine some key words and they aim to establish a solid base of the European identity across the involvement of the Bulgarian citizens from different social groups in the actions and events of the projects. Some of the successful initiatives and projects are named: *„My home and my European family, „Paint your European family ".* The state institutions and media in Bulgaria create video clips, publish them in the official sites and broadcast them in the social networks: *„Our big European family"* http://vbox7.com/play:8935ab58 (VBox7 is an analog of YouTube). Another project is named positively "*What is European home and how to build it*?" The activities include such as "*the European Day of Languages*" http://edl.

ecml.at/Home/Whatisit/tabid/1760/language/en-GB/Default.aspx.

The state policy includes new initiatives and they appreciate the role of the Internet to build the sense of affiliation and to persuade the Bulgarian citizens that 'European identity' is not an abstract notion. The state and cultural institutions have started the project "*Europeana – virtual home of the cultural heritage of Europe and Bulgaria*" http://www.emilstoyanovmep.eu/public/files/news/2/document_10.doc. The equal participation, evaluation and appreciation of the cultural heritage of Bulgaria is a fact.

The strategic program "*Europe 2020*" (http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm) includes some durations, projects and programs and some of them are "*European Platform against poverty and social exclusion"* (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=961), *"Youth in Action program"* (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/), *"Triangle of knowledge"* (http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/understanding/what/era_in_the_knowledge_triangle_en.htm), *"Europe of knowledge"* (http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/2004/univ/pdf/conference_proceedings_10-09-04_en.pdf), *"Europe – intelligent, green, common*" (http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm).

The Bulgarians who work, learn and travel in the European countries use such terms as "*European health fund*", "*European health card*". Students, teachers and professors work successfully with other European countries on the programs Socrates, Erasmus, Erasmus – Mundis, Lingua, Komenski, Grundtvig, Minerva, Leonardo da Vinci etc.

The people from the educational sphere understand the pluses of educational mobility,

twinning and the advantage of the "Five freedoms" – free movement of knowledge (the four freedoms include

the free movement of people, goods, services and capital).

Discussion:

'European identity' shows that the changes on verbal level are the result from the need to name the political and integration processes and the concepts of the Bulgarian and European legislation. There are civic and cultural dimensions as well as Bulgarians try to save our national identity.

The new research fields include analyses of the current events, where a significant space is given to the comparison of the concept of 'European identity' with the concepts of 'national', 'Slavic' and 'Balkan' 'identity'.

There is a sense of the civic affiliation to the EU and the European identity of the different generations, as well as of the citizens living in the Republic of Bulgaria and abroad, in particular in the European countries or in the USA, Canada, and Australia etc.

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