

**RESEARCH REPORTS 16**

**Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asiatic Concerns of  
an Enlarged Europe: a Bulgarian View**

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***THIS RESEARCH REPORT IS A VERSION OF THE AUTHOR'S PRESENTATION ON A SIMILAR SUBJECT AT THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DIRECTORS CONFERENCE (I R D C), ON 18-19 JUNE 2004, ORGANISED BY THE AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN VIENNA AT THE PREMISES OF THE DIPLOMATIC ACADEMY ON THE TOPIC: "VISION OR DI-VISION IN AN ENLARGED EUROPE?" THE RESEARCH REPORT DRAWS FROM HIS PREPARED TEXT AND FROM THE RESULTS OF ON-GOING STUDIES ON EURO-ATLANTIC, BALKAN AND BLACK SEA-CASPIAN SEA REGIONAL SECURITY STUDIES BY ISIS.***

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For historical, geopolitical, domestic and other reasons the *enlarged Europe* of 25 ‘+2’; ‘+3’, or ‘+4’ does not have a homogenized vision of the extent to which EU should differentiate itself in the realm of security from the United States of America. This causes fundamental *concerns* to the new members of the Union and to the other two, three or four that would join in the next few years. The *Bulgarian* perceptions of this issue cause concerns as to the most appropriate roles and functions of the country in the *Euro-Atlantic* area as well as relative to the *Euro-Asiatic* neighborhood when the country joins the Union.

First, as a NATO member that keeps its commitments and responsibilities to the allies and as a future EU member Bulgaria has concerns as to how to organize most effectively its participation in the Alliance and in the European Security and Defense Policy of the Union, especially in the NATO Response Force (NRF) and in the EU Rapid Reaction Force (EURRF). Being at the very entrance of both institutions we have a feeling that the similarity of security and defense tasks are not logically linked to the principle of the economy of organization and the principle of financial effectiveness. The experience with Iraq showed something even worse – there is a perceptual and political differentiation within EU and NATO. The problem had to be overcome through clear and firm choice of position in support or in opposition of the leading NATO country – the United States. The problem will, however, persist in an enlarged and enlarging Europe and the functional integration in the defense and security sector would not be able to progress smoothly and contribute to the furthering of the integration in the other functional sectors. Another concern in the discussed context is how to keep the interest of NATO, USA and the EU on the Western Balkans and complete the hard job, started in the 1990s.

Second, in this same line of thought there are certain concerns about the involvement of the country in the Union’s neighborhood policy, mainly its Euro-Asiatic direction. While the interest of the EU is nearer to its borders, the interest of the leading NATO ally – the United States, is territorially bigger and goes beyond the EU neighborhood area. Bulgaria risks to be perceived as non-complying with EU visions and policy if continuously

involved in the Greater Middle East region while the Union does not itself involve there. Bulgaria hardly has the potential to bridge the interests of the two partnering centers of power, though the efforts of Sofia would not stop. This problem, however, limits the capacity of the country to focus on an issue of direct economic interest as the construction of TRACECA, the 'new silk road' – an issue of priority interest for the Union too. Eventually the G-8, EU, EU-US and NATO summits in June 2004 would channel in a more favorable for countries like Bulgaria direction the interpretation of the 'Greater Middle East' responsibilities of the participants, in these prestigious political clubs.

Another concern of immense magnitude is the yet unreformed Russian military establishment that continues to be educated in Russian imperial dreams in its military education institutions. At the same time the challenge of having a socially vibrant and democratic Russia in the ranks of the leading countries, fighting terrorism would require imagination and effort, including from Bulgarian diplomacy and security policy thought and practice.

In an enlarged Europe the neighborhood gets closer to the heart of the continent, so do the problems of Eurasia. A settled trans-Atlantic relationship between enlarging Europe and the United States is a powerful guarantee for coping with the Union's neighborhood issues.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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