EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY: DO THE STATES MATTER?

Tatiana Tomova

Abstract

The article explores the issue of the European policies' deliberative character and analyses the challenges the Member States face participating in this process. The idea that the European process depends rather on informal institutions, including on the identifications of participants is developed on the base of the European Employment Strategy analysis. The effectiveness of the common employment policy passes through the ability of States to formulate national priorities and to implement them in the framework of the common process. This capability that is not proven from the National action plans study is related to the States representatives' perceptions of the European process and their own role in it.
Key words: European Employment strategy, deliberation, informal institutions, national priorities, identifications.

European integration is a process that occurs at many levels and multiple arenas (Wallace, Wallace, Pollack, 2005). Its results depend on many actors who take part in more or less structured interactions. In this process composed of multiple processes the role of the Member - States depends on the formal institutions which define their powers (including voting and blocking power) as well as their ability to maximize their own benefit in the field of European policies. This article attempts to define the factors that affect the ability of the Member - States to create benefits for the citizens they represent and assess the capabilities of the Bulgarian State to contribute to solving specific problems of the country.

This research problem is identified because of the fact Bulgaria is different, because of the gap with the average values of the EU indicators, the atypical for European countries pre-emptive development of indicators for the public sector to economic indicators, traditionally high activity on the labor market, values and attitudes of Bulgarian citizens. This makes the country a specific environment for the implementation of EU acquis communautaires, where compliance with general rules can not only have results that are seen as unfavorable by the local citizens but also have adverse side effects. In this respect, Bulgaria is not a specific case. What is said about it applies to all other Member - States, but when the economic gap is significant and the Protestant ethic is only known from the literature, the application of general rules goes along with and leads to considerable risks.

In Bulgarian literature about the EU the European integration is interpreted more as a normative rather than a political issue, more as a process of change and implementation of European legislation, rather than a process of achieving common goals at all levels of European

governance. Studies in European law raise the question of legal integration and the specific problem of introducing it into the inner regulatory environment. This research perspective includes in the analysis the active role of domestic institutions, but mostly in regards to the demand for regulatory compliance. The basic thesis is the supremacy of EU law over national legislation which gives domestic institutions the part of the executors nevertheless the process depends on internal political institutions and actors.

Existing Bulgarian political science researches on European integration for the most part follow the logic of traditional Political science and mostly analyse the division of power in the horizontal and vertical plan. This point of view makes a significant difference between issues and topics to which the community approach was undertaken and those remaining areas of State competence. In this way in the areas of transmitted competence the role of States as independent political entities is limited to participation in the decision-making. Areas that remain according to European law a responsibility of the Member - States remain outside of the scope of research.
This article follows a different perspective. It is not focused on the formal institutions that are subject to both legal and traditional political studies of European integration. Within this article they are only the rules which define the environment for interaction between multiple actors of different nature and behavior. The analysis follows the New institutionalist logic according to which informal institutions - repetitive practices, values, symbols and identification are important to the European process (Bulmer, 1998). Such an analysis is more focused on participants' behavior rather than on formal rules and political structures that outlining their role but do not give it weight.

New institutionalism enters the field of European research not by coincidence in the 90s. This is the time when the political construction of the EU began. No matter how similar it was to the existing representative democracy models, had to go through new forms of political governance and collective action. The three simultaneously opposing and complementary schools - Rational choice, Constructivism and Historical institutionalism are used to explain the emerging European politics as a response to theoretical deficits of influential at this point Intergovernalism and New functionalism (Pollack M. A., 2008). New institutionalism became very influential in the analysis of European Comitology where practices are more important than formal institutions and in the analysis of the EU expansion, where questions like "Why the EU started negotiations in the presence of obvious budgetary and institutional risks?" and " What would be the effect of the negotiations and eventual membership for the reforms in the countries - candidates?" require the use of new theoretical paradigm.

This article seeks to answer the question of the challenges faced by the governance of the Member - States, which remain accountable for their citizens' collective goals achievement in a condition of relative autonomy and independence within the economic and political community. The answer of this question is not connected to any formal vertical division of EU power nor to the improvement of the political structures of representative democracy on Community or State level. The answer lies in the ability of the state representatives to participate in the process of European policies and contribute to maximize the benefit for citizens on the territory in their competences. This means not to just participate in the vertical EU power but to also be actively present in the process of learning, lesson drawing and on this basis – be able to define collective goals of the political community they represent and to introduce them in the European policies.
Europeanisation is not (just!) a process of transposition of EU law or of change of the institutional culture and structures. There is a third pillar in the process of change of the States under the influence of the European community - their attempt to actively adapt to the EU. This is an on-the-fly adjustment because the Union is a dynamic system. It is developing though as much as a top-down process - from the acquis communautaires to the legal and institutional systems of the Member - States, as a bottom-up process - from the States and their ability to participate actively in the whole cycle of European policies towards the creation and development of the European economic and political system as a whole. Europeanisation is a process of changing the conditions for inclusion in the integration process but also a process of creation of results that turn the EU into a dynamic and comprehensive economic, political and social system. These results are not created bottom-up nor are they created in the opposite direction. They are created in the process of European political governance. This process is linear with multiple actors who recognize each other and exchange interests and influence, thus creating benefits and providing services to European citizens and their associations[1].

Understanding the European integration process as a results-oriented process makes the question of the behavior of representatives of the states a central problem of European studies. This in turn makes the New institutionalism fundamental theoretical paradigm in this research area. This is evident in fields which, according to European law are of State or special competence, although it is valid according to our opinion for the European process as a whole.

[1] For this article purposes the Rhodes definition of governance (Rhodes R. A. W., 1997) that is not developed specifically for European process is used.

In the areas of State competence, even in the presence of an institutionalized mechanism for formulating and implementing common policies, practices are more important than institutions, the behavior is more important than formal rules, which puts the State representatives in a position that depends on their ideas, identifications and professional competencies. Such fields is the common employment policy that is developed through the European Employment Strategy (EES) and National employment plans (NEPs) - documents developed only as a step in the overall process of structured interaction between supranational and State representatives.

Identification of the autonomous behaviour of the Member - States in the European process issue as a research problem may incorrectly be perceived as part of the scientific and political debate between "Federalists" and "Subsidiarists". In fact the problem raised does not relate to the division of power in the EU but to the ability to develop rational and feasible policies that lead to favorable results for the European integration. This is not a question of at what level - State or Community, to make and implement the decisions, but a question of how to set up common actions and to minimize risks to the Community and to limit the centrifugal tendencies in it. The thesis of this article is that the answer comes from the ability of States to define national priorities and to achieve them within the European process. Achieving national goals is not (necessarily!) to compromise the achievement of the European ones. Rather, achieving common European goals is made possible through the realization of national priorities. This suggests they may be defined simultaneously in a common process in which each community speaks through its own representatives and thus participating in the elaboration of common policies. This suggests also the European integration should not be perceived as a bureaucratic- in Weberian sense process that goes top to bottom in conditions of hierarchical political power and distributed between Community and State level competences, but as a form of deliberation and policy learning between participants from all levels of European governance.

The vertical cycle of the Common employment policy:
from the Commission through the States to the results and back

European employment policy develops to respond to both market and social problems (Taylor-Gooby P., 2003). It has significant social impacts, particularly as regards the inclusion of groups with special needs and young people to the labor market. At the same time, and above all, the common policy of employment maintains competition within the European economic space and creates conditions for free movement of companies and people by bridging and binding the

national labor markets that are characterized both with different quantity and quality of labour supply and demand and with the presence of specific institutions.

The development of the common employment policy began in the late 80s as part of the creation of the Common European market. It is a response to the problem identified as "social dumping": "a practice involving the export of goods from a country with weak or poorly enforced labour standards, where the exporter's costs are artificially lower than its competitors in countries with higher standards, hence representing an unfair advantage in international trade. It results from differences in direct and indirect labour costs, which constitute a significant competitive advantage for enterprises in one country, with possible negative consequences for social and labour standards in other countries"[2]. Social dumping lies is the basis for introduction of common minimum standards which aim to reduce the differences in labor costs within the common market and thereby to restore the jeopardized competitiveness of companies that are at a loss from maintaining higher social standards. This is the beginning of development of the first pillar of the employment policy[3] which supports the rights related to employment through the introduction of secondary legislation made under a specific procedure that is a variant of the Community method (Rhodes M., 2005).

Regardless of the social implications in terms of quality of work and life of the workforce, the introduction of common standards of the rights related to employment may have adverse consequences for firms, sectors and economies that rely on low labor costs. In the immediate term they enter into conflict with the maintenance of employment in these markets. In the long term their beneficial effects are not guaranteed - they depend on the ability of the political institutions and the administration to manage the process of achieving collective goals. Improving the quality of the employment may lead to a dynamic development depending on the behavior of economic agents and especially on their mobility and their decision to remain in the internal market of goods, services and labour. This decision is in direct relation to the ability of the governance to maintain favorable economic and social environment in which employment quality is only one aspect of the whole.

[2] http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/SOCIALDUMPING.htm

[3] The common employment policy analysis follows the above quoted approach of H. Wallace , W. Wallace and M. Pollack that is based on the idea the common policy go off as “a series of policy models” that jointly produce the European integration results. Thus the common employment policy runs as a legislative process at European level, a collective bargaining and a soft compliance via European Employment Policy. The three processes lead to a same result but go off differently – on the base of different institutions and through the interaction between different participants.

Because of the institutional features of the first pillar of the employment policy, the variations and possibilities for adaptation of the Member States are slim. They must maintain the minimal and higher standards of rights related to employment. Objectives related to safe and healthy working conditions enter into State public policies as mandatory and achieving them can create problems that should be further identified and resolved through the instruments of governance.

The other pillar of the employment policy began to develop in the late 90s. Within a very short period - no more than a decade in total, in the common employment policy a new process took form with a new institutional design that substantially differs from the traditional Community method of creating European policies: it is the beginning of the soft law within the European employment Strategy (EES) and the coordination of national employment policies. This new pillar of the Common employment policy is seen as an experimental method for creation of European policies, which simultaneously solves two problems of the European governance: the formulation and achievement of common goals becomes possible without legislative change of competencies on one hand; on the other a common action is taken on a policy issue in which the Member States have very different, even contradictory institutional tradition.

Why is the change in competence impossible? In the period between Maastricht and Amsterdam treaty, between the Social Protocol and the Employment chapter, the European employment debate on the common social policy, in which scope the employment policy falls, is intricately structured by two cleavages. On one side is the argument between liberals and social democrats, on the other - between “Federalists” and “Subsidiarists”. Ultimately four "camps” are outlined (Rhodes M., 2005), which became insurmountable obstacle for the legal change of competences in employment policy field.

The other obstacle to common employment policy is related to the institutional tradition of the Member States. The 90s were a period of serious challenges to the troubled Western Welfare States. They are simultaneously faced with three problems that cannot be solved simultaneously. Furthermore, through familiar tools of governance in the Member States the resolution of one of them is usually at the expense of one of the other two. This is called a "service sector trilemma", which indicates the conflict between employment growth, maintaining the wages level and compliance with budgetary constraints. The outlining of the trilemma is a consequence of the change in economy and technology, and especially of the expansion of the services sector, which changes the structure of employment and the formation and distribution of added value created in

the real sector. Despite the myths of the collapse of the Western Welfare States that were popular the 80s, the Member States adapt to emerging problems and respectively solve the trilemma while maintaining their institutional traditions. Western Welfare States retrench without losing their institutional characteristics (Esping-Andersen G., (ed.), 1996).

As a consequence of this "Path dependence" the Member States adopt different strategies for coping with emerged trilemma. The Anglo-Saxon countries take measures to adjust the regulations in respect of wages, the Nordic countries continue their policies of employment creation, continental European countries maintain high labor costs but lose their capacity to create employment (Rhodes M., 2005). This behavior of the Member States is encoded in the characteristics of their industrial relations and their legacy regulations on the labor market (Table 1).

Table 1. Institutions of the labor market in the EU Member States (based on Rhodes M., 2005)

	Industrial Relations	***Regulations of the labor market***[4]
Anglo-Saxon countries	Statutory limitations on government regulation	Flexibility
Scandinavian countries	Corporate negotiation	Flexibility and security
Continental European countries	Public regulations	Security
Countries of Central and Eastern Europe	State regulations in conditions of weak representation of both sides: employees and employers	Security at relatively low cost[5]

Central and Eastern Europe States build the institutions of their own labor markets in the 90s in the conditions of a wide open window of opportunity, which makes the radical change of policy possible[6]. From the mixture of factors conflicting in its impact, in these countries emerges a specific model that blends seemingly incompatible characteristics - low corporate representation with highly developed state regulations.

[4] This indicator structures specifically the families between European countries and makes the following groups: Anglo-Saxon, European Nord, and European South. The difference with the groups shown in the Column 1 of the Table is shaped from the borderline case of Germany that combines public regulations with both flexibility and security on labour market.

[5] This result is not identified by M. Rhodes. It is added by this article author.

[6] This is the John Kingdom expression, used to explain the particular situation where due to the simultaneously changes in politics, technology and knowledge the Path dependence is broken and the radical policy change becomes achievable. In the Central and Eastern Europe countries such window of opportunities was opened in terms of political and economic transition during 90s.

The existence of some institutional models of the labor market in the Member States renders impossible both the negative integration through the liberalisation of employment relations, and the positive integration through the establishment of common institutions. The common model is not evident. The European Employment Strategy, that marks the change in the common policy from protection to creation of employment, is an innovative policy process which allows the formulation and achievement of common goals in the conditions of missing prerequisites for the rallying the participants around common values and shared vision. It is the policy response which overcomes the contradictions in the political debate and creates conditions for development of objectives and instruments that would simultaneously target the issue of job-creation in and by all State-members. As ineffective as it sometimes seems, the European Employment Strategy (Trubek D. M. and J. Mosher, 2001) cannot to be replaced with anything else because of the insoluble problems faced by the European governance in employment field.

Its characteristics as an innovative method of European governance replicate features of the public policy theoretical concept.

- It is not a form of government. Its development as a process implies a heterarchical participation of actors. Participants are legally defined, but are in linear, equal relationship. Thinking about the participants as hierarchically subordinated distorts the European Employment Strategy and is at the expense of her performance.
- The process of the European Employment Strategy involves both vertical and horizontal policy integration across the EU's multi-level polity. It involves organisations from the Community and State levels of governance, which in turn interact with their social partners. Inadequate representation of the social partners in the process may be at the expense of EES performance
- Strategy as a process, not just as content, develops as problem-solving. It starts with the identification of the problem and ends with evaluation of the results of actions taken. In procedural perspective, it is constructed so as to identify and resolve new emerging problems. The lack of identification of new problems decreases the EES effectiveness.
- European Employment Strategy's logic is based on deliberation and "policy learning", which involves an assessment of results and development of the new strategy on this basis, taking into account induced economic and social changes. The formulation of the same goals at the resumption of the policy cycle without taking into account factors that have influenced their achievement, renders the EES process meaningless and decrease the quality of its performance

• EES as a process and content involves use of benchmarking and reference to "best practices". Using these methods as part of the procedure increases its effectiveness because it stimulates coordination and ultimately convergence through the introduction of common benchmarks for advancement.

There are similarities and significant differences between the European Employment Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination, which is defined as an additional method for the common policies making (Table 2). Both contain the linear logic of public policies, both are non-binding, but differ in the degree of structuring, procedural orderliness and normative commitment. In this sense, the European Employment Strategy as a process allows relatively small variations in national policies because it introduces common objectives and indicators for their achievement. Both processes, however, placed the Member States and their representatives in the same situation: joining them presents a challenge both to their professional and political competences. The ability to participate in a non-binding process of formulation and implementation of common goals requires skills and identifications that allow independent behavior as a representative of a political entity. The behavior of an administrative servant destroys the logic of European integration in the field of employment, not only because it does not allow the achievement of specific objectives of the Member State, but also because it diminishes the effectiveness of the process as a whole. Lack of adequate conduct of the representatives of the Member States is at the expense of both their own political entity and the European process.

Table. 2. European Employment Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination (Rhodes M., 2005, p. 291)

	EES	***OMC***
Source of legitimacy	Legal	Political
Legal or political	Treaty of Amsterdam: Employment Title	Lisbon Summit (2000)
Policy area	Employment	Social inclusion; Pensions; Education; Research and innovation;
Policy aim	One-dimensional	Multi-dimensional
Instrumental differences	Stronger	Weaker

As a process the European Employment Strategy goes in steps that occur at different levels of European governance. Their sequence sets the vertical cycle of this pillar of the common employment policy[7].

1. The process begins at Community level with the identification of common problems. The Agenda setting depend most heavily on the Rotating Presidency and the Commission. At this first step the Commission develops general ideas about the best employment strategy for EU Member States to pursue. The Commission develops these ideas in discussions with the Council of EU, Member States, the relevant social actors such as unions and employer's organisations, and academics.

2. On the base of the ongoing benchmarking the Commission proposes Guidelines approved after that by the Council of EU. Since 2003 the Guidelines are developed and approved in form of result-oriented priorities. Specific guidelines are drawn up indicating actions that Member States should take to modify their national employment policies. This is where the EES takes concrete form. An attempt is made to produce a multi-area strategy cutting across a range of domains that affect employment such as taxation policies, unemployment policies, education policies, and gender policies. Commission must formally consult the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and the Employment Committee before releasing the final version of the proposed guidelines.

3. Every year Governments of Member States develop the National Action Plans (NAPs). Each Member State draws up NAP for taking the guidelines into account in their employment policies.

4. The measures planned in NAPs are implemented at national level.

5. Each year the Commission examines the implementation of the guidelines by the Member States. It uses the National Action Plans, implementation reports, and its own inquiries to assess compliance. Annual peer review of the NAP is done in the "Cambridge process" framework. Programmes on active labour market policies (from 1999 onwards) are peer reviewed as well as. Based on its assessment, the Commission can propose to the Council that recommendations be directed at the Member States. Such recommendation can be passed in Council of EU with QMV.

[7] The EES process is reconstructed on the base of M. Rhodes (Rhodes M., 2005) and D. M. Trubek (Trubek David M. and James Mosher, 2001) works.

6. At the end of the annual cycle, the Commission and the Council write a Joint Employment Report on the employment situation in the Union and on the implementation of the guidelines by the Member States.

7. While the Joint Employment Report is being written guidelines for the upcoming year are being developed and the cycle begins again. It is also at this point that the Commission can revise its theory of what is hindering European employment, identify new best practices occurring in Member States, and modify its overall strategic outlook.

The stepwise process of the EES embraces five major governance objectives (Trubek DM and Mosher J., 2001):

• Promote learning by creating conditions for continuous improvement of the process and the level of achievement of goals related to employment;

• Enhance coordination among levels of government by creating conditions for the simultaneous achievement of community objectives and objectives of the Members by the decomposition of guidelines into national priorities, and then through the development of joint plans for employment based on monitoring and evaluation of the results from the implementation of national policy measures;

• Integrate separate policy domains by targeting the employment issue via different sectoral policies;

• Enhance participation by opening the process to multiple participants at all levels of European governance;

• Ultimately promote convergence while allowing diversity[8].

Achievement of these objectives however is hypothetical. They are included in the model, but may not be realized if they violate the linear logic of the process and the Commission turns from administrator of the process into its political leader. The possibilities for such change in roles accompany most of all the steps that are implemented at state level (steps 3-5 according to the above presented order) and depend on the ability of the State representatives to participate in the process of policy learning and deliberation. Such capability is not and cannot be embedded in the model, but rather depends on the values, knowledge and identifications of the participants in the process.

[8] The goals in Guideline 2003 are reconstructed on the base of quoted M. Rhodes work.

The changed roles in the European employment strategy can be identified by the following indicators:

- The coincidence between the common and national goals, which may be expressed in the absence of specific identified problems, target groups, measures, anticipated results in the national action plans on employment;
- Lack of development of national objectives in time, which is due to the lack of specific analysis of the situation and the changes in it.

National priorities in the European Employment Strategy

Existing studies on the impact of the EES on national employment policies are focused mainly on the degree of compliance achieved. Usually, they question the effectiveness of the Strategy and make it dependent on the convergence of measures that countries take to achieve their goals in the sphere of employment. Behind this approach lies the assumption that the Strategy's objectives can be achieved through the adoption and implementation of similar in content policy instruments. In this way the strategic and operational objectives are mixed and the question of the effectiveness of policies is replaced with the question of implementation of eligible measures.

This research approach to a great extent corresponds to the adopted policy approach. Still at European level the common goals are decomposed to very concrete targets that minimize the possibility of variations in national policies. This approach is introduced with the launch of the process of the European Employment Strategy and confirmed with those introduced in 2003. The four stands defined in 1997 Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, Equal opportunities have then been replaced by three objectives: Full employment, Quality and productivity at work and Social cohesion and inclusion decomposed in ten goals:

- Active and preventive measures for the unemployed;
- Job creation and entrepreneurship;
- Address change and promote adaptability and mobility in the labour market;
- Promote development of human capital and lifelong learning;
- Increase labour supply and promote active ageing;
- Gender equality;
- Promote the integration of and combat discrimination;
- Make work pay through incentives to enhance work attractiveness;
- Transform undeclared work into regular employment;

• Address regional employment disparities.

The process of decomposition of the objectives in the Strategy 2003 continues with the introduction of quantified targets as following:

• Every unemployed person to be offered a new start within 6 months of unemployment in the case of young people and 12 months in the case of adults;

• By 2010, 25 percent of the long-term unemployed to participate in an active measure;

• By 2010, at least 85 percent of 22 year olds in the EU should have completed upper secondary education;

• The EU average level of participation in life-long learning should be at least 12.5 percent of the adult working-age population;

• By 2010, achieve an increase, at EU level, of the effective average exit age from the labour market from 60 to 65;

• Provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90 percent of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33 percent of children under 3 years of age;

• Achieve by 2010 an EU average rate of no more than 10 percent early school leavers;

• All job vacancies advertised by national employment services should be accessible and be able to be consulted by anyone in the EU by 2005.

Seemingly the introduced qualified targets are not significantly different from the minimum standards for save and health in work. So what is the difference between flexibility and traditional secondary legislation? And where are the opportunities for states to define and achieve their own priorities?

Unlike the minimum standards which are binding and may be introduced or maintained only as more favorable to employees, quantitative targets are defined specifically. They are required as indicators, but not as a value. That means the countries can define them independently on the basis of expert analysis and in negotiations with the stakeholders. In this way the national priorities correspond to both the analysis of the situation and the attitudes and positions of the social partners. Participation in the process of the European employment strategy does not imply overachieving or transfer of the objective set out in the Guidelines or in the recommendations of the Commission and the Council. The aim is to justify and defend national priority, as set out in the internal process of policy-making. Such an understanding of the presence of the state in the EES process refers mainly to the development of National Action Plan for Employment (step 3 in above represented EES process).

The implementation of NAP (step 4) sets new challenges, which again affect the attitudes of the representatives of the States towards the European integration. Like any process of implementation achievement of the planned results in the sphere of employment and within the European policy is accompanied by risks because of the dynamics of the economic and political environment. There are risks to the achievement of results, but there are also risks to the political governance in other sectors or in relation to other topics. In the process of implementation constant feedback must be maintained so that all possible risks are minimized. This means that the European process should be seen as a process that is managed and not as a process that is being executed.

The need for the European process to be managed has a specific projection in Central and Eastern Europe and especially in Bulgaria. The specificity is a consequence of it being more or less behind in economic and technological aspect, of the relatively lower quality of life, of inherited institutions and of the existing public attitudes. Achieving a high level of employment in conditions of low productivity, limited supply of high-tech jobs and very low wages is a challenge with no obvious solution.

Monitoring and evaluation of NAPs implementation (Step 5) also is of deliberative type. This assessment has nothing to do with the bureaucratic process in which higher authority shall evaluate the implementation of the task. The purpose of this assessment is to improve the process, which means that it should proceed as data sharing and data analysis. Such understanding again gives an active role of the representatives of the States to demonstrate their own contribution to the achievement of common goals.

Studies show that representatives of the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic States understand their presence in the European Employment Strategy as an administrative rather than a political task; as a fulfillment of competencies rather than a participation in deliberative process to develop common policies (Palpant C., 2006). The analysis based on five countries (Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia) with similar trends – low rates of employment, strong regional disparities, large long-term unemployment and the development of the informal economy, shows that, while a lack of time and the technical and financial obstacles have played a role in the situation, three other major reasons also explain the shortcomings:

• The content of the EES itself: for a long time, several problems that are central for the new Member States were given little attention in the EES;

• Insufficient training by the European Commission: its attitude during preparation for accession did not induce a relationship of mutual trust with the national governments, nor, as a consequence, facilitate better expression of the priorities and objectives of the EES.

• Consequently, the EES was often perceived by the new Member States as an administrative exercise, and this has prevented it from reaching its objective of convergence in the Europe of 25.

This long quote is needed there is not yet a similar study on the attitudes of the Bulgarian representatives involved in the EES process. However the analysis of National action plans on employment[9] shows that the situation is rather similar. If the indicators of changing roles in the deliberative pillar of the employment policy defined above are applied, we can draw the following conclusions:

• No significant difference is found in the objectives formulated in the annual plans for the period 2008 - 2012. The target groups, at which the planned measures are directed, are the same in all yearly developed NAPs.

• The target groups identified in the national employment plans coincide with the groups that the European employment policy defines as disadvantaged on the labor market.

• Specific problems, such as the lack of high tech job supply, are not identified in the plans;

• The names of the reports reiterate the main objectives of the European employment policy, which leads to the fact that two annual reports have the same name, although at the period of time that separates them, the world economy has slipped into crisis.

• The characteristics of the environment in which the planned measures will be applied - low productivity, high share of shadow economy - are not interpreted as risks to achieving the objectives.

In contrast with the quoted study, we believe that the problem is not in the supranational institutions ignoring the specific problems of the new Member States, but rather in the ability or rather the lack of ability to participate in the deliberative process of creating common policies. Overcoming this deficit does not depend on the Commission's conduct; it depends on the development of skills and change in the identification of States representatives. Achieving this goal goes through training and creation of a new generation of civil servants and political representatives who have competence to participate in the European process and identify themselves by the political community that they serve and represent.

[9] Bulgarian NAP on employment 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012.
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