
Irina Yakimova*

**BULGARIA – EEC/EU RELATIONS IN THE LATE 1980s AND DURING
THE 1990s: RESEARCH ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

(Summary)

The article presents an overview of key research themes and addresses challenges inherent in the study of Bulgaria's relations with the European political and economic sphere during the late 1980s and the 1990s. Rather than providing a comprehensive examination of Bulgaria's transition, the focus is primarily on the historiographical aspect, delving into Bulgaria's path toward the EEC/EU. The article outlines the difficulties researchers face when working with archival sources and electronic information, emphasizing the positive impact of expanded access to declassified documents, outlining, for example, the various stages of the negotiation process between Bulgaria and the EEC/EU's institutions before and after the landmark year of 1989. It marks the initial systematic attempt to categorize Sofia-Brussels relations from a historical perspective, representing a noteworthy contribution to the field. This is the first attempt at such a systemization of Sofia-Brussels relations from a historical perspective, which is one of the contributions of the present article.

Keywords: Bulgaria, EEC, EU, Eastern Europe, transition, research challenges.

* Assist. Prof. Irina Yakimova, PhD - Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9172-5223>; e-mail: iyakimova@ihist.bas.bg