

## Open letter to Richard Rahn

(in response to your article entitled “The Success of Eastern Europe”; The Brussels Journal, [www.brusselsjournal.com](http://www.brusselsjournal.com), 2012-09-06)

Sir, I take issue with your writing: You are proclaiming a success what actually is nothing short of a total disaster!!!

I will present herewith some arguments concerning Bulgaria, of which I am most knowledgeable; however, the situation in Romania is just about the same, if not worse, and my information about the others – the Czech republic, Slovakia and Hungary in particular – point to only marginally better situation, as compared to those two.

Now, how can you talk of any improvement when from 9.0 million in 1989 the Bulgarians today number 7.5 million? An estimated 2.0 to 2.5 million people having left for good, of which about half represent the quintessential “brain drain” that anybody in the West could have only dreamed about, decennia ago, among other things as a sizable saving in education. This exodus represents in my view a self-inflicted national genocide that the ruling Nomenklatura is collectively guilty of, and should one day be held accountable for. And you are proud of advising the perpetrators?

Sir, how can you talk of improvement in the economic situation of a country which 20 years after 1989 has a GDP about the same size as it was then? I am sorry, but using just the standard PPP numbers is pointless. What do you make of the facts that today:

- about one third of the population is living below the poverty line;
- about one third is just hovering at and above it;
- each of above being formally admitted by the government sources – a fact suggesting that the actual situation is much worse;
- the minimum monthly salary is less than 150 euro (and that is in fact an artificial category, mandated by the government in order to define the tax on labor; in reality it is a public secret that people accept to work for less, in an environment of official unemployment never leaving the realm of double digits – and, due to extreme centralization that is designed to serve the ruling “elite,” featuring countless number of small towns where 20-50% is the local norm, not the exception);
- the minimum pension is less than 140 euro, and that is just above the (official) poverty line; you might want to learn that there are about 3 million retired people in this country – obviously a large portion of them seek additional source of revenue, such as e.g. in the gray economy; the rest rely on remittance from abroad, in order not to starve, the alternative being scavenging the garbage bins;
- the average monthly salary is less than 350 euro – if we assume that it is realistic, which it is not, being an official number as well, but it’d be too long to dwell on here;

- above average salary would purchase you 700 loafs of bread; in 1981, just prior to myself leaving Bulgaria, the average salary of the equivalent of 100 euro would get you 1400 loafs of bread; today you could buy 1400 eggs, while then you could afford 2000... I could continue this listing for quite some while, and nowhere along that road would I be able to cite something that amounts to even a glimpse of hope for demonstrating your “achievement,” i.e. any sign of progress in the right direction...
- finally, the UN Development Index tracking sums it up best: from 29th place in the 1980’s, within two decennia the country slipped to 55th place – is this what you call success? From a reasonably well economically developing – albeit under Soviet diktat – and prospering – no unemployment, no poor, no beggars, every citizen “middle class member,” no illiteracy, no housing problem, surplus in food, export of manufactured goods – country then, today’s “democratic” Bulgaria manifests all the characteristics of a banana republic and keeps sinking in the ranking, already a Third World member by most measures. What a remarkable accomplishment, indeed!

In brief, the “transition” from “Communism” to “Democracy” has brought the Bulgarian state to its knees and the Bulgarian people have been impoverished as never before in the country’s millennia old history. Contrary to popular belief, membership into EU has further contributed to the disaster. I have explained this in detail in my recent book “Bulgaria, terra europeansis incognita” ([www.dukaty-books.com](http://www.dukaty-books.com)) where also arguments in detail are presented about why using the standard PPP comparison makes no sense. More important, I have outlined what I consider the first and only (to my knowledge) objective and realistic comparison between the two systems, in terms of their impact on the economic and cultural aspects of population’s everyday life. Guess what? “Communism” wins hands down! No wonder all independent polls today report that in 60-80% of the responses, within the relevant age groups, people consider having been better off prior to the arrival of “Democracy!” The masses being nostalgic to “Communism” is the true achievement of 20+ years under “Democracy” – that is the only real result which you could, in all fairness, take pride in contributing to, if you wish, no objections here.

Now, before you stick to me a label of Commie or another affiliation of that sort, let me inform you that on 01.03.1982 I have defected to Belgium, where I am a citizen with accomplished career of executive in the microelectronic industry, recently retired, and my Bulgarian citizenship was restored only in 1994. Moreover, in 1954 my father, a regional enterprise director in Burgas, Bulgaria, has been sentenced to death by the Communist “People’s Tribunal” for “economic sabotage of the young socialist republic,” in a mock up of a trial designed to scare the populace into submission. In 1955, at the age of 35, he has been executed, leaving behind a son of 7 and a daughter of 2; my mother has not been given the body, nor have we been shown his grave. I do challenge you – and anyone else, for that matter – that nobody than myself could be better qualified as advocate AGAINST Communism. Yet during all my life I am striving for uncovering the whole truth, and can not – nor will knowingly permit to – be blinded by ideological reasons.

The question may be raised “Why comparing to Communism given comparing to EU is readily available?” Well, that is true, and by the way even though it uses formally derived parameters (like in your case) there it is plainly seen as well that Bulgaria is by far the poorest and totally, completely, helplessly lost (that is, with no chance to get any closer to the better-off “sister-countries” on the block). Hence my search for a different approach, digging much deeper, in order to analyze the chances – and the pathway – for getting out of the current morass.

The reason for my choice here is to raise your awareness that we all have been looking in the wrong direction. In my book I have presented the case that the modern representative democracy has degenerated into its last – terminal, I believe – phase that I call Nomenklaturocracy. The source of evil being the profession of “politician” and the aspiration of those – typically undereducated, with limited personal abilities and unsuccessful in any other profession individuals, otherwise rather ambitious and pretty greedy – who form the Nomenklatura to cling to power (and the presumed riches that comes with it, even to the least capable, sufficing to be “politically correct”), three conclusions are becoming obvious: (i) Communism (a single party Nomenklaturocracy) and Representative Democracy (a multi-party one) are basically the same animal, the ideology being used essentially as a tool to justify staying on power, with all the “nuances” being simply a function of the conjuncture; (ii) Such system inevitably fails economically, due to inherent malaise: uncontrolled overspending (wasting) of national resources – more politely I would put it as “irresistible tendency to assign ever-increasing added value to the activities of a huge non-productive while ever-growing bureaucratic machine.” (iii) The world is pregnant with system change and the only reasonable alternative to Nomenklaturocracy is an optimized form of Direct Democracy. More in the book.

Hence in continuation of the search for improvement in Bulgaria, far beyond PPP, the use of which makes no sense here, as well as most other macroeconomic parameters, I do suggest that one needs also to take into account other criteria as qualifiers of the nation’s “state of mind” and “quality of life.” I’d throw herein just a tiny sample of those, in order to raise your awareness about the facts that:

- before 1989, all Gypsies were working and all their kids were studying in school; today most Gypsy parents are unemployed and on state benefits (apart from those pesting the French, the Italians, the Norwegians, etc.) and – protected by idiotic EU policies – engage in theft, damage of property and all kind of other criminal activities, begging apart; and the majority of Gypsy kids boycott schooling, whatsoever;
- before, education, medicare, social security, recreation were all free or quasi-free of charge – no more today;
- before, there was an incredible emphasis on culture; today cultural life in Bulgaria is a 24 carats example of the perfect disaster;
- before, there was respect for the traditional values (we are one of the oldest peoples in the world, respectively claiming one of the richest palette of traditions), unlike today when the only “value” ruling over here

is the very same – first and only one – that rules America and, after being imported a while ago, in Western Europe: making money, and fast!

In conclusion, never before has the moral of my countrymen fallen that low! Never before had patriotism completely disappeared from their minds and souls. Or all the Christian values, for that matter, the very same that first consolidated the nation's formation from three originally different peoples, and later on enabled the endurance of almost five centuries of Ottoman yoke. The "success" of the Nomenklaturocracy of the last 20 years can be measured only by the wiping out of all moral categories and replacing it by the one also called "American Dream." Leading to the total moral degradation accompanied by economic misery never experienced before, given this nation's resources.

Obviously, in view of the briefing above I can not but find your proclaiming the success of Bulgaria's evolution of late either the result of a superficial analysis by perhaps biased or ignorant researcher-theoretician, or otherwise a plain mockery! Case closed.

Yours sincerely,

Ivan Daraktchiev

Belgium-Bulgaria, 16.09.2012