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**Parliamentary committees in the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria**

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**I. General characteristics of the dissertation work**

1. Importance of the topic of the dissertation.

Each dissertation must meet the criterion of relevance. Constitutional studies acquired social and political significance in the light of the deepening crisis phenomena in the beginning of the 20s of the present century in Bulgaria. The political crisis, which arose in connection with the systemic failures surrounding the formation of a governing political majority, grew into a parliamentary crisis with the series of unsuccessful attempts by the elected National Assemblies to form a government. Added to this is the continued functioning of higher state bodies in the Constitution, outside of their constitutional mandate or with an incomplete composition, such as the Supreme Judicial Council, the Inspectorate of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Constitutional Court, as well as the crisis phenomena surrounding another state body - the chief prosecutor to outline the contours of a constitutional crisis. In this situation, the relevance of constitutional studies, including those related to parliamentarism and the parliamentary form of government, is markedly strengthened. The scientific community is faced with the task of affirming the role and importance of constitutionalism as the fundamental basis of the entire socio-political life in Bulgaria and the only legal, fair and progressive model for the realization of public power as opposed to force and voluntarism. A central place among the studies in the current context should be those works that are focused on the study and development of the Bulgarian parliamentary model. The dissertation fits into this trend.

The subject of parliamentary committees also looks outside the country to highlight common guidelines. There has been a worldwide trend towards shifting the political weight from the executive decision-making body to its committees, turning them into "small parliaments" and bureaucratizing the process of adopting state decisions. For this reason, the careful study of parliamentary committees has its important socio-political, legal and scientific significance. This, as well as the fact that relatively little attention is paid to the issue in Bulgarian and European literature, determines the issue of the development of scientific knowledge in the field of parliamentary committees in terms of modern constitutional theory and practice. In this way, the present work tries to carefully analyze the historical development, political existence, legal essence and nature of the parliamentary committees, to derive and formulate ideas and scientific concepts, thereby contributing to the enrichment of scientific knowledge in this field and tried to contribute to the development of parliamentary theory and practice.

2. Subject and tasks of the research.

The tasks that the present study seeks to accomplish are summarized in several groups. First of all, one of the objectives is to study the prerequisites for the emergence and establishment of parliamentary committees in the context of the political balance of forces in a given society, as well as to analyze their historical development. In the framework of this search, the aim is to study what are the factors that influence their structuring in one form or another, to clarify the functions that parliamentary committees perform, the forms of work and the order of their activity.

Next, the work tries to analyze the role of the committees in the implementation of each of the individual functions of the National Assembly with an emphasis on the most significant two of them – the legislative function and the control function.

Finally, the research discusses the functional, political and normative status of the Bulgarian parliamentary committees, considered in the context of the country's participation in the European Union, as well as discusses the issues surrounding modern auxiliary bodies in the quasi-legislative assemblies of supranational organizations such as the European Union.

The dissertation attempts to substantiate several theses. According to the author of the study, the committees of the National Assembly are auxiliary bodies without their own political existence, whose competences are entirely derived from those of the legitimate plenary composition. Their constitution and activity are functionally related to the political balance of power in the specific National Assembly, the powers of the committees are secondary to those of the plenary session of the National Assembly, and their acts do not have binding legal effect outside of the hypotheses expressly stated in the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure.

The scientific work evaluates the historical development of the committees through the prism of the above-mentioned thesis and tries to impose the view that the constitutional model of moderately strong parliamentary committees adopted in our country is the optimal and most successful option for a system of auxiliary bodies, given the historical development, the political balance of powers after 1989 and the nature of parliamentary committees.

The subject scope of the scientific research also includes the issues surrounding the Committee on European Union Affairs (CEUA) - a matter that has not been developed in Bulgarian science. The issue of the special role of this committee in the National Assembly to ensure compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in the European legislative process by imposing a parliamentary reserve was discussed. The practice of the CEUA considering drafts of EU legislative acts without distributing them among all committees according to the sectoral and functional principle was also discussed, as well as the auxiliary control functions that the Committee on European Union Affairs has - to conduct hearings of candidates for positions in the institutions of the European Union, proposed by the Council of Ministers.

Another topic that Bulgarian constitutional science has the task of examining has been also discussed. This is the possibility of the EP to implement directly on the territory of Bulgaria a legally binding will and the role, place and legal status of its auxiliary bodies - the European parliamentary committees, in this context.

3. Scientific methodology used.

The methodology that this dissertation uses for its purposes follows established standards in legal sciences. Various scientific tools were used in the study, with the help of which to reach scientific knowledge, such as research methods. The historical scientific method was predominantly used, revealing the dynamics in the development of the parliamentary committees in the context of the ongoing historical processes in their dialectical sequence.

Given the existence of the Constitutional Law as an emphasized political law arising as a result of a certain balance of political interests, the research quite naturally uses the political-sociological method in its attempts to gain knowledge about the parliamentary committees, considering political relations in the context of what predetermines them such as the socio-economic development of a given society, as well as from the clash, competition and interaction of political forces within it.

The classical legal scientific method is added to the listed methods - the normative method, which is designed to reveal the content of the constitutional norms regulating the relations regarding the creation, organization and activity of parliamentary committees, as well as the comparative method, extracting knowledge from the achievements of the constitutional legal system of other countries.

4. Volume and structure of the dissertation work.

The dissertation is 225 pages long (font 12, spacing 1.5 Times New Roman), which includes a title page, table of contents, abbreviations used and an 8-page bibliography, and 212 pages of actual text. In the content part of the dissertation, three chapters are distinguished, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs.

**II. Content of the dissertation.**

1. CHAPTER ONE – Origin and development of parliamentary committees in the context of the evolution of constitutionalism.

§ 1. General commentary of scientific knowledge about parliamentary committees.

The first chapter examines general concepts and knowledge bases for parliamentary committees. The origin of the word „committee" and the available literature are examined, including the foreign and the European ones, on the issues of the parliamentary committees in its historical context and evolution.. Attention have been paid to the political studies of the parliamentary committees, only insofar as they concern the legal system and the existence of constitutional legal relations with the subject of public power and the rights of citizens, or if they consider the balance of forces in society and parliament, as well as in what correlation it is with a given regime of parliamentary committees.

This dissertation adheres to traditional understandings of committees as auxiliary bodies of parliament and seeks to defend the view that they do not have the democratic legitimacy to exercise public power, but should be limited to their auxiliary role only.

§ 2. Background and emergence of parliamentary committees.

This paragraph examines the factors that are mandatory prerequisites for the very existence of parliamentary committees - the functioning in the system of a representative legislative body with political powers to implement public policies and the presence of a legislative assembly with a developed system of powers, which are not limited only to solving ad hoc questions, but represent a complex. From this statement comes the conclusion that parliamentary committees are characteristic of the era of Modernity and theoretically cannot appear in the medieval feudal system, where power has a theocratic origin and is concentrated in the person of the monarch. Formations familiar to the ancient Greek slave-owning system, for which sufficient written sources are available, are singled out as the primary sources of the committees in the representative (estate) bodies. As an example of this, the Council of Five Hundred, Boule (Gr. "council"), in the Ecclesia of Ancient Greece - the supreme body in Athens during its "Golden Age" in 5th century BC.

Three stages are distinguished in the evolution of the system of parliamentary committees, depending on the relevant period, in which the development of parliamentarism itself takes place, according to the division known to science into early, classical and rationalized parliamentarism. The time limits and characteristic features of the work of the committees for the early stage of the development of parliamentarism are pointed out, indicating historical examples from the Western European state and historical tradition, examined in its evolutionary dynamics.

§ 3. The committees under classical parliamentarism.

In this paragraph, the peculiarities of the work of the parliamentary committees under classical parliamentarism, which is characterized by the establishment of the parliament as the center of political life at the expense of the monarch, are outlined. The problem is again discussed through the prism of historical development in individual European countries. The evolution of the committees in France is examined - the creation in the second half of the XIX of ad hoc committees - separate for each of the two chambers, the separation after 1902 of the so-called "large permanent committees" as well as the "main committees" in the upper chamber of the French national assembly - the Senate. The legal status, powers, functions and types of parliamentary committees during the period of classical parliamentarism in the United States of America, Great Britain and Sweden are discussed and examined in detail.

Special attention is paid to the development of the system of committees with the introduction of the so-called mixed or conciliatory committees whose task is to resolve disputes between the two chambers on the occasion of the adoption of a specific act by the legislative body. The first permanent committees, similar to the modern subcommittees in Italy, as well as the special investigative committees conducting activities to verify certain data, which can concern both events and persons, are examined.

§ 4. Committees in rationalized parliamentarism.

The research devotes the most serious attention to the parliamentary committees after the end of the Second World War, when parliamentarism passed into a new stage of its development - modern (rationalized) parliamentarism.

In the era of modern parliamentarism, the role and place of the committees is confirmed as an essential element of the internal organization of legislative assemblies, which assist them in exercising their legislative, control and constitutive functions. It is argued that this is the period in which the role and place of the parliamentary committees as an auxiliary body of the legislatures unfolds in full.

Attention has been paid to the practice of using inquiry committees that study various issues of public importance, the creation of investigative parliamentary committees, as well as the transfer of powers from the plenary to a specially selected committee to exercise the power of the legislative body during its vacation in those systems that have adopted the session mode for their legislatures.

A characteristic feature of the stage of rationalized parliamentarism for the regulation of the legislative process and the requirement that permanent committees must participate in it has been brought out, and various forms of manifestation of this work in the activity of the legislative assemblies of France, Great Britain, Germany and the United States of America have been discussed.

The merit of the present study is a discussion of the legal status of the various parliamentary committee systems in countries such as Japan, India, China and Latin American countries.

§ 5. Nature of parliamentary committees.

In this fifth paragraph, the scientific concept of "committee" is discussed, according to which committees are entities, an expression of the internal autonomy of parliaments, which consist of one or more people elected by an assembly to discuss, investigate or take action on a particular matter.

The views on building the parliamentary committees in compliance with the principles of vertical and horizontal differentiation, as well as the derivative nature of the powers of the committees, are advocated. The legislative function, the constitutive function and the control function performed in relation to the government were examined. The thesis has been made that in the exercise of their duties, the committees do not exercise their own powers, but assist the representative assemblies in the exercise of these functions. In addition to this, in their existence as organizational structures supporting the legislative assemblies, the view is advocated that the committees also realize independent functions, which, however, do not have their own constitutional and legal dimensions, but are entirely of a political nature.

There are two groups of functions realized by the parliamentary committees - constitutional and political. The main directions of parliamentary activity are embodied in the constitutional functions and they are legislative, constitutive and control. Work optimization, political representation of sectoral interests, information supply and party coordination are considered as political functions.

CHAPTER TWO – Historical dynamics in the development of the Bulgarian parliamentary committees.

§ 1. General characteristics of the Bulgarian parliamentary committees under the regime of the Tarnovo Constitution.

In this first paragraph, a brief attention is paid to the evidence of the character and structure of the Bulgarian government from the founding of the state in the 7th century until its collapse at the end of the 14th century. The dynamics of development of Western societies in the period before the Liberation were also examined, in order to reach a scientific knowledge of the very nature of parliamentary committees as phenomena that arose in a certain context.

This part discusses the socio-economic and political prerequisites for the establishment of the constitutional regime under the Tarnovo Constitution, which became the basis for the appearance of the Bulgarian parliamentary committees. The formation of prerequisites for free trade, the transformation of agriculture into commodity agriculture, the appearance of the first factories and large farms, the emergence of industrial production and small trade, which shape an urbanized population, are brought out. Class stratification in the Ottoman Empire and questions of how the entry of capitalist production affected them as well as how it affected political relations are discussed.

The thesis is defended that, despite these changes, constitutional development for Bulgaria does not originate from internal socio-economic and political processes, but from the outside as a result of external factors and in an effort to borrow and adapt European constitutional models to Bulgarian conditions. Since there was no hereditary aristocracy in the country, nor a strengthened bourgeois stratum, the received constitutional system could not fully institutionalize the real balance of political forces and thus create constitutional mechanisms for settling the problems of power. Instead, the system itself serves as a generator of subsequent political division - along the lines of elected representatives - king, respectively - liberalization of the political system with broad popular participation - a conservative tradition. In this way, two political tendencies are implicitly laid down in the work of the newly established National Assembly - firstly, to become an arena of confrontation between the two and secondly, to realize the real political representation of the emerging Bulgarian bourgeois stratum.

 Next, a general description of the political system established by the Tarnovo Constitution is made - form of government, role and place of the people's representative, passive electoral right, status of the people's representatives and their free mandate, powers and position of the king, legislative and control powers of the National Assembly. The legislative process under the Constitution of 1879 is carefully examined.

The founders of the Bulgarian kingdom did not consider it necessary to regulate at the constitutional level the creation of auxiliary bodies - committees to support the work of the National Assembly. The legislative process under the Constitution is simplified, which, according to the Constituent Assembly, does not necessitate the presence of permanent committees assisting in shaping preliminary political support and refining the texts.

Brief attention is paid to the concepts of a new constitution that existed during the years of the Tarnovo Constitution, such as the two draft constitutions of the cabinet of Andrey Toshev from 1935 and the draft constitution of Prof. Stefan Balamezov from 1936.

§ 2. Stages in the development of the system of committees in the Tarnovo Constitution.

The development of the system of parliamentary committees in the Tarnovo Constitution is deduced, which goes through three independent stages, reflecting the role and place of the committees as auxiliary bodies, the degree of normative organization of their work process and the levels of politicization and opposition within them.

The first stage covers the time from the convening of the Constituent Assembly in 1879 to 1885, and it is characterized by the construction of the basic principles for the system of committees, the normative consolidation of the main positions in their work, the practical testing of various options in carrying out the activity them, as well as the absence of political opposition.

Within this stage, scientific research turns its attention to various questions. Such are the initial steps in state building, related to structuring committees and their work rules, which are done already in the first years of parliamentary practice. It is characterized by the creation of non-permanent ad hoc committees. Their goal is to coordinate the work on solving a specific problem, so that at an expert level, in a working environment, a specific project for a solution can be proposed to the National Assembly.

Characteristic of these first auxiliary bodies in the work of the Bulgarian legislative assemblies is the absence of procedural rules for their activities. Decisions regarding the possibility of participation in their meetings by other persons - representatives of the people or citizens, as well as the order of convening, the leadership of the committees, the way of working, the legal effect of the decisions and their reports, are made on the spot without obeying previously approved and statutory rules. The composition of the committees is also not bound by legally established rules, and the issue of whether the number of committee members should be even or odd is not regulated either. The committees are completely free to resolve all issues arising in connection with the organization of their activities. There are no quorum requirements. The committees have their own rapporteur, who presented the results of their work, and for each separately created committee, a deadline was set in which to finish its work.

Parliamentary practice introduces in this first historical period the figure of a temporary chairman of the commission, who directs its work, puts the proposals to a vote and organizes the commission's activities until a permanent rapporteur is elected. This election, in turn, is not carried out by the National Assembly, but by voting within the committee itself from among its members.

A distinction has been made between the committees as auxiliary bodies elected to clarify certain issues within the competence of the National Assembly and the trial committees formed on the basis of Art. 106 of the Constitution. The former most often assist the assembly in exercising its legislative functions. In contrast, trial committees do not participate in the legislative process, but are a form of control implemented by the National Assembly.

Attention is also paid to an important precedent at this stage, relevant to the institutionalization and distribution of the functions of verifying the legality of elections and the powers of the people's representatives - the rule that the verification of the legality of elections is assigned to a special mandated committee. Historical examples in the work of election committees - procedures and legal status - were examined.

The legal position, tasks and functions of the commissions for preparing a response to the prince's throne speech, the commissions for preparing the rules of the National Assembly and the petitions commissions were also examined. The special role of the latter, which perform their activities throughout the mandate of the National Assembly and can be defined as the first permanent commissions in Bulgarian history, is discussed. The term "standing committee" was also used for the first time in the selection of petition committees.

The legislative process in this first stage of the development of the parliamentary committees is analyzed, which is characterized by the absence of systematized rules for distributing the work of discussing bills in the committees. It is necessary to see that separate ad hoc committees are created for each bill.

Lastly, for this early stage, the conclusion was drawn that political control by the National Assembly lacks effectiveness, and given the low degree of political confrontation in the years until Stefan Stambolov came to power, the institute of inquiry committees, as and the judicial investigation committees for realization of criminal responsibility of ministers does not apply.

In the dissertation work, the second stage of the development of the parliamentary committees under the Tarnovo Constitution is brought out - in the years between 1885 and the First World War. It is characterized by the institutional strengthening of the committees, the establishment of rules for their activity and a relatively calm working environment without extreme political opposition, so that the committees become a place for discussion and finding the best solutions.

Attention has been paid to the frequent formation of committees of inquiry to investigate alleged election violations, as well as to the final overcoming of the practice of creating ad hoc committees for each individual bill and replacing them with the election of several committees to consider bills introduced from the government, which have the character of permanent - act for the entire period of the specific session of the National Assembly and consider all bills that are tabled at the initiative of the government. Standing committees are built on the basis of the departmental principle - one standing committee for each ministry. In Art. 161 of the Tarnovo Constitution, the number and names of the ministries are exhaustively listed, which gives stability and inflexibility to the system of permanent committees.

At this stage, attention is also given to the introduced legal possibility for the Committee on Petitions to issue a final act within the competence of the National Assembly without prior or subsequent sanction from the plenary session on the questions submitted by citizens, as well as to the regulation of a legislative process of three readings and the participation of the committees therein.

As a peak in the development of the systematization of the legal framework dedicated to the committees, the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, adopted by the 11th National Assembly, were examined. Its normative decisions regarding the management and order of activity, forms of work were examined as well.

As a final emphasis, the development of the positive legal regulations related to the control exercised by means of the committees and mainly - the committees of inquiry is brought out. The most common type of inquiry committees are those formed in connection with election violations, and the constitutional grounds for their election have been examined. Also discussed were the committees of inquiry on government, which appeared for the first time during this second historical period, elected on the basis of Art. 106 of the Constitution or of Art. 5 of the Ministerial Trial Act.

The last, third stage in the development of the committees under the Tarnovo Constitution, which includes the period from the First World War to 1946, is presented, with a detailed political-sociological analysis of the material prerequisites for the emergence of those social processes and relations that will prove to be decisive about the political system. During this stage, the normative procedure for the order of work of the committees was perfected, but the political confrontation passed into a state of civil war, and the effective work of the committees was blocked by the ultimate confrontation or removal of the opposition.

The third, crisis stage in the development of the committees during the operation of the Tarnovo Constitution is characterized by the use of the committees as a means of suppressing the political opponent. During it, the political majority demonstrated an unwillingness not only to observe the principle of proportionality in the election of standing committees, but even to ensure any political representation in the committees. Therefore, during their activity in this period, the tasks of achieving political consensus or compromises on issues of national importance cannot be effectively secured, and the burden of political decision-making shifts entirely to the parliamentary and party majority.

Attention was drawn to the new parliamentary rule that was formed during this period - that a committee for the preparation of new rules for the organization of the assembly's activities should not be formed, but instead that the old rules should apply, amendments to which, according to its provisions, can be made by a certain number of people's representatives. The cumbersome amendment procedure leads to a lack of flexibility and results in practice overtaking rule-making where developments in parliamentary relations necessitate change. Politicization of voting in the committees of the National Assembly, reduction of debates on the results of the work of the election verification committee, as well as the usual absence of more than half of the people's representatives - members of committees during the examination of their agenda - were discussed.

Attention has been paid to the expansion of the regulations regarding the role and powers of the management of the committees - chairman and secretary. The changes in the implementation of the control function of the National Assembly through the creation of committees of inquiry were also examined, and the work of a trial committee in the XVII National Assembly to inspect the offices of Ivan Evstratiev Geshov was subjected to special analysis, with an emphasis on the preparation and conduct of the Balkan wars, of the Parliamentary Trial Committee to survey the management of the former cabinet (of) Al. Malinov–St. Kosturkov, elected by the XIXth National Assembly on October 12, 1922, as well as the first investigative committee with judicial and investigative functions in our country - created by virtue of the Trial Law of the ministers, which was adopted in 1919 by the XVIIIth National Assembly.

§ 3. The Bulgarian parliamentary committees under the 1947 Constitution.

In this section, the dissertation discusses the deep socio-political restructuring of the country after 1944, which is reflected in the adoption of a completely new constitution. The new form of government and the role and place of parliamentary committees in it are briefly discussed. The place of the National Assembly as the supreme body is explored.

A novelty in the development of the committees in this period is their anchoring at the constitutional level in the texts of the Basic Law. In Art. 22 of the Constitution establishes the election of a committee for verification of elections immediately after the constitution of the National Assembly. The deadlines and the subject of inspection of the committee, which must report on confirmation or non-confirmation of the election of each national representative individually within a three-month period at the latest, become constitutionally regulated. Attention has been drawn to the restored tradition of a specially selected committee of representatives preparing and proposing the adoption of new regulations for the internal order of each subsequent National Assembly.

In the initial years of this period of development of parliamentary committees, the legislative framework did not provide for revolutionary changes. All established practices for the organization of the committees’ activities and their powers are preserved - standing committees by ministries, budget and review committees, prohibition of participation of one representative in more than two committees, leadership of committees by a chairman, order of work and method of decision-making, limitations in the scope of the inquiry committees for the elections, etc. Participation in committee meetings is already among the rights of the representatives.

Although it goes beyond the subject scope of traditional parliamentary committees, attention has been paid to an important phenomenon from Bulgarian state practice - the creation of a special committee for drafting the Constitution by the VI Grand National Assembly. The Constitution of 1947 was the product of the work of a committee in this assembly.

In this historical period contours acquired the division of committees into three types - permanent committees, special committees and inquiry committees, and for the first time the legal concept of permanent committees appeared. The decisions of the April Plenum (1956) and the assigned political task of strengthening the National Assembly and its bodies were discussed, analyzing the place of the committees in the Assembly not simply as passive helpers, giving expert weight and formality to an already made political decision, but in their capacity as policy initiators.

The reform of the Standing Committees of 1962, by which the powers of the Committees were greatly expanded, and they could now examine drafts of normative decrees and give conclusions on them, was carefully discussed. In addition, the reforms of the 60s of the XX century sought to free the committees in the National Assembly from their dependence on the Presidium of the Assembly in the periods during which it is not in session, subordinating them only to the plenary composition. In the work of the committees planning began to take place.

 This is the historical period in which the standing committees asserted their role as the venue for serious expert debate, attracting interested parties, representatives of public organizations and scientific circles. The weight of the debates shifts entirely to the committees of the National Assembly. They are entrusted with a wider range of tasks, greater efficiency is ensured. Their initiative has increased.

Publicity in the work of the commissions, as well as their relationship with various structures of society, is being strengthened. A novelty is the possibility of the participation of experts - representatives of institutions, enterprises, public organizations or academic circles.

In carrying out the control function, the standing committees have the right to carry out inspections, based on which proposals are prepared to the National Assembly or to the Presidium, on questioning of ministers.

Development acquires the positive legal regulation in connection with the work of the subcommittees. This legal concept replaces the regime sections of the Tarnovo Constitution. Working groups in the National Assembly were also examined as a form in which the committees organize their work - their types and order of activity.

For the first time, a conciliation procedure was introduced, provided that there were disagreements in the opinions of the various committees discussing a given bill.

Worthy of attention is also the possibility for standing committees to submit proposals through the bureau to the Council of Ministers, with which the latter is referred to consider the possibility of coming up with a legislative initiative on a certain issue.

The contribution to the development of the committees in our country during the period of validity of the Constitution of 1947 is related to the institutionalization of a special legislative committee, through which all proposals for the adoption, amendment, addition and repeal of laws necessarily pass.

The practice of precisely defining standing committees following the departmental principle according to the relevant ministry is abandoned, adopting instead the sectoral principle of work.

Branch specialization is deepening in the work of standing committees, which is reflected in the increase in their number. Their political initiative is being strengthened.

The regulation of the work order of the committees in the National Assembly is also developing, i.e. leadership and voting. It is envisaged that the meetings will be convened by the chairman or by a quarter of the members of the committee.

What deserves special attention is the inclusion for the first time in the history of the Bulgarian committees of the possibility for them to determine the order of their work by means of adopted special rules.

The regime under the 1947 Constitution affirms a legislative process of two readings with the mandatory participation of the standing committees of the National Assembly. The procedure is markedly formal and does not give political weight to the committees when discussing, amending and supplementing the bills.

Emphasis is placed on the evolution in the functions of the committees of the National Assembly, related to the control over the executive bodies. From the constitutional texts, the special criminal responsibility of the ministers, implemented through the parliamentary process, is removed. Control under the 1947 Constitution, as well as under the 1971 Constitution, differs from classical political control in its foundations. The control exercised by the National Assembly as the supreme body - directly or by its committees - is a manifestation of the unity of the forms of exercise of state power and, more specifically, of the unity of legislative and executive activity.

The control of the committees was examined as preliminary, current and subsequent, depending on the time in which it is carried out - in the procedure of preliminary agreement, when monitoring the activities of the relevant ministries and agencies and when monitoring how the laws and decisions of the National Assembly are implemented.

The work of the National Assembly from this historical period in the establishment of special committees of inquiry to study individual issues from the economic, state and cultural life of the country is also briefly discussed. Despite the envisaged normative possibility, however, real control by the committees in the National Assembly through the mechanism of inquiry committees was not observed during this period.

§ 4. The Bulgarian parliamentary committees under the effect of the 1971 Constitution.

In this period, the strengthened political positions of the ruling Bulgarian Communist Party as a result of successful industrialization, as well as the development of public relations as a prerequisite for the adoption of the Constitution of 1971, were investigated.

Analyzed in the new constitutional regime is the preserved place of the National Assembly as the supreme body of state power, which combines the legislative and executive activities of the state and exercises supreme control.

The considered stage is characterized by the preservation of the previous evolutionary experience, but also by the manifestation of specific functions of the committees, which proceed from the special place of the National Assembly in the new constitutional regime as the supreme body. Standing committees begin to participate in the formation and implementation of state policy and assist in the implementation of laws and other acts adopted by the Assembly.

In this period, great attention is paid to the regulation of the rules for the work of the committees, their tasks and competences. The procedure for consideration of draft laws and other acts of the National Assembly and their preliminary preparation in the committees are described in detail. The adopted sectoral principle and functional principle of their construction are studied. The posiotion of a special Legislative committee, considering all draft laws, is examined.

The personnel composition of the standing committees is approved for the entire period of the mandate, and not for the specific session, as is the practice under the Tarnovo Constitution.

The explicit mention in the Constituition of the Election Verification Committee, which gives a conclusion to the National Assembly on the legality of the elections at the latest in the second session after their conclusion, is preserved. For the first time, with the Constitution of 1971, the distinction between permanent and temporary committees in the National Assembly was introduced at the constitutional level.

Standing committees are given the right of legislative initiative, and they are again a mandatory participant in a two-reading legislative procedure.

The control carried out by the standing committees also developed, beginning to affect more and more spheres of the political organization of society and acquiring some features typical of administrative and judicial control - including the legal possibility to implement sanctioning consequences in case of non-compliance with the law. To the extent that the National Assembly sits in sessions and performs its control functions only in these periods, the auxiliary control of the standing committees affirms its role as a permanent, systematic control over the executive bodies. The committees of the National Assembly on its behalf "supervise" the ministries and other departments and local state bodies and assist in the implementation of the laws and other acts adopted by the National Assembly.

The standing committees have the authority to directly demand that the controlled bodies - individual ministries, departments or district people's councils - implement their recommendations.

Although the Constitution of 1971, like the previous one, provides for the creation of inquiry committees, during the period of its operation, the practice did not know the use of this instrument in the implementation of the control functions of the National Assembly.

Parliamentary practice in this period introduced a completely new status of the standing committees in the National Assembly, which went beyond the traditional outlines of auxiliary bodies. Parliamentary committees in the Basic Law of 1971 acquire independent powers and have the competence to cause legal change in the legal sphere of another state body. In essence, these are competences through which public authority is exercised. In view of this, during the years of of the Constitution of 1971, the standing committees in the National Assembly were not classic parliamentary committees, but were specific committees.

§ 5. Parliamentary committees in the work of the Seventh Grand National Assembly (1990-1991) and in the projects for a new constitution.

In this section, the preconditions of a socio-economic and political nature, which are the basis of the change of the constitutional system, are discussed. The work of the Committee for drafting an amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, as well as that of the Parliamentary Committee for consideration and resolution of some urgent issues related to admitted deformations and violations of legality in state, public and economic life and of other similar committees of inquiry has been examined.

Attention is paid to the positive results of the introduction of the principle of political pluralism, which soon restores the previously abandoned principle of proportional representation in the committees of political parties according to their electoral weight, which has not been effectively applied since the beginning of the 20th century.

Despite the radical transformation of the political system, the construction of the committees continues the tradition of being based on the sectoral principle. Along with the sectoral principle, the functional principle is beginning to make its way more and more distinctly in the allocation of committees according to the main functions of the state, and it manages to a certain extent even to push the sectoral principle as the leading one.

The previous stage in the development of the committees in the National Assembly with the marked strengthening of their role and powers in exercising control was not overcome in a revolutionary way. The next main characteristic trend, which the authors of the new constitutional model set, is related to the emergence of numerous and most diverse parliamentary committees. The idea of carrying out special supervision over the people's representatives themselves by a special committee to monitor compliance with moral norms - the Committee on Parliamentary Ethics, whose organization and order of activity has been studied - appears.

The Grand National Assembly strives to prepare a normative base that will be the basis for the complete restructuring of society and the state. Because of this, the system of committees that the Assembly forms is not predominantly permanent in nature, and instead the matters under discussion are often given to specially selected temporary committees for the purpose.

Committees of inquiry are also elected on various occasions - for example, a committee of inquiry on the files of the people's representatives in the Grand National Assembly. For the first time in Bulgarian political life, they began to accept non-normative political acts, such as addresses to various state institutions or class organizations.

Another tradition of the Bulgarian statehood was continued, emphasizing the special role of the committees as auxiliary bodies - the work on the creation of the new Constitution was assigned by the Grand National Assembly to a special committee - the Committee for Drafting a Constitution. The Constitutional Committee in the Seventh Great National Assembly is divided into nine separate subcommittees, which are entrusted with the preparation of parts regarding individual state, political or public institutions.

In the Regulations of the Grand National Assembly from this period, the special rule was introduced that the Council of Ministers should inform the Committee on Foreign Policy or other relevant competent committees about all concluded international treaties that are not subject to ratification. After reviewing the contracts, the committees have the power to issue conclusions on those contracts before they are approved by the Council of Ministers.

The central role of the Legislative Committee in the legislative process as a sort of filter through which all bills pass has been removed. The other standing committees participate in the course of a bill discussed by the Grand National Assembly on an equal basis with the others, according to their functional competence.

The parliamentary practice owes the introduction of the concept of "leading committee" to the work of the Seventh Grand National Assembly and the rules prepared by it. Another important innovation of the Grand National Assembly, which found a place in the subsequent parliamentary practice, is the comprehensive listing of the standing committees in the regulations for the organization and activities of the assemblies.

The dissertation contains a detailed analysis of the political regimes proposed with the individual drafts for a new Constitution considered by the Grand National Assembly. The analysis of the deposited constitutional drafts shows that they contain different variations of republican and parliamentary form of government under a unitary form of government. This affects the constitutional status of the committees in the National Assembly, which are inevitably assigned auxiliary activities in the implementation of the legislative and control function of the parliament.

3. CHAPTER THREE - Parliamentary committees in the current constitutional regime - General characteristics.

§ 1. Nature and functions of parliamentary committees. Kinds.

In this section, the dissertation carefully discusses the nature of parliamentary committees as collective, auxiliary, specialized structural subdivisions of the National Assembly, having personnel that assist it in the performance of its constitutional and political functions. Their legal nature as an auxiliary body is explored. The understanding that the functions performed by the committees actually make sense only within the framework of the constitutional tasks set before the National Assembly is supported. The committees are not assigned separate constitutional functions.

Brief attention is also paid to the place of parliamentary committees in the political process with an emphasis on the role in the individual stages brought out by the author: proposal for an act, adoption of the act, implementation of the act, evaluation of the implementation and public discussions.

 Emphasis is placed on the fact that parliamentary committees do not have their own democratic legitimacy, different from that of the National Assembly, as well as on the breaking of the chain of delegation of power from individual voters to parliamentary committees. The thesis is defended that in parliaments with a system of "strong" committees, their democratic legitimacy increases, in contrast to systems with "weak" committees, where party discipline comes to the fore, as well as that parliamentary committees and parliamentary groups are find in inversely proportional dependence regarding their influence in the political process. The more influential the parliamentary groups are in actual political relations, the weaker the parliamentary committees and vice versa. The thesis is laid down that the role and importance of standing committees in political relations increases with coalition governments and that there is a correlation between electoral systems in which the personality of the candidate is brought out as a guiding principle - in majoritarian systems as well as in proportional ones preferential voting systems, and the strengthening of the role of parliamentary committees in the political process.

The understanding that the committees assist the National Assembly in forming the general will of the nation for the adoption of a specific bill is not supported. On the contrary, the acts of the committees of the National Assembly are an expression of the will of a specific parliamentary majority.

The role of parliamentary committees as advisory and specialized bodies was discussed. They become a center for careful and detailed discussion of bills or other proposals with the involvement of experts, representatives of the executive bodies, the academic community and others.

 The grouping of the functions performed by the committees in the National Assembly is summarized in two main sections - constitutional and political. Depending on their role and place in the constitutional and political process, the functions are further divided into basic and additional.

The constitutional functions of the committees are listed as auxiliary legislative, auxiliary control and auxiliary constitutive functions. They are discussed in detail.

Along with the mentioned three constitutional functions, the committees in the National Assembly perform four main political functions of their own, through which they support the activity of the legislature - work optimization, political representation of sectoral interests, supply of information and party coordination.

The historical experience of Bulgarian constitutionalism also knows the investigative functions of the parliamentary committees in the course of the realization of criminal responsibility for members of the government. Today, such functions have been abandoned by the current Constitution. However, two additional political functions have been added to them - interaction with society and development of professional skills and training.

The construction in historical context of the parliamentary committees based on three principles - departmental, sectoral or functional - has been examined. In our country, the standing committees in the current constitutional order are built on the basis of the sectoral and functional principle, and their number, type and names are determined in the Regulations for the organization and activities of the National Assembly.

Next, in the dissertation, a distinction was made between the parliamentary committees and other bodies supporting the activity of the legislative assembly - the expert advisory bodies, established pursuant to Art. 70 of the Constitution of Greece sections, the parliamentary factions, the special committees for the preparation of internal elections in the legislatures of some European countries, as well as the permanent delegations of the National Assembly in international organizations.

Heterogeneous classifications of parliamentary committees have been derived depending on various criteria, taking into account their role and tasks, order of election, content of powers and others. The committees as constitutionally provided and committees created according to a certain need are carefully examined. Depending on the normative act in which their creation is provided for, they are committees provided for in the Constitution, committees provided for in the law, committees provided for in the regulations for internal order and ad hoc committees.

Depending on the obligation to create committees in a normative act, the committees are mandatory and optional. According to the organization of their work over time, the committees are divided into sessional and legislative. Depending on the nature of the powers available to the committees, they are general and special. In the case of the first, the competences of the committees are explicitly listed in the normative acts forming the basis of their constitutional status as auxiliary bodies. In the case of special committees, special powers are provided by law, which are available to them, based on the special tasks that these committees should solve.

The next classification that is considered is that of parliamentary committees depending on the forms of the state in which the role of the representative assembly is manifested. According to the form of government, we distinguish between parliamentary committees in a narrow sense and parliamentary committees in a broad sense or also committees of legislative assemblies. In countries that have adopted a federal form of government, we further distinguish between federal committees and regional committees depending on the entity they support - the federal legislative assemblies or the regional parliaments.

The next distinguishing criteria concerns the structure of the legislature in bicameral assemblies – the committees are divided into committees of the lower house and committees of the upper house. Depending on the method of determining their composition, parliamentary committees are divided into committees with an absolutely certain number, with a relatively certain number and with an absolutely indefinite number.

The division of committees into permanent and temporary depending on their nature and the term for which they are created is well known. This division is given the most serious attention in the study, based on the functions of the relevant committees. On the other hand, the standing committees are divided into legislative and non-legislative ones depending on whether or not the drafts for the adoption, amendment, addition or repeal of a law according to the specific matter necessarily pass through them.

Temporary committees are essentially of three distinct types. They are formed on a specific occasion, to study individual issues and to conduct surveys. The same are consistently and in detail examined.

The classification in the Anglo-Saxon legal literature of the committees as strong and weak depending on their capability to influence a decision in the course of the political process is discussed. Those committees are strong where the committees have the ability to determine or influence the final outcome of the legislative procedure or the particular policy action. With weak committees, this option is not available.

It is known that the committees are divided according to the functions they perform into legislative - those that participate in the legislative process, internal - dealing with issues related to the organization of the work of the National Assembly, and inquiry committees whose activity is focused on the implementation of political control.

In the exposition, attention was paid on the specific standing committees operating under the regime of the Constitution from 1971. They are not traditional auxiliary bodies of the National Assembly, but occupy a special place in the constitutional system of the country. Their essence differs from the traditional permanent committees in the National Assembly in several features, which have been brought out and developed in detail, i.e. as regards their powers, immediate tasks, order of activity and legal nature. The thesis has been made, according to which the specific permanent ones show their existence as an independent body on the occasion of the functions assigned to them to assist in the implementation of the laws and other acts adopted by the National Assembly.

The next special type of committees, which are the subject of research in the disertation, are the permanent legislative committees, whose creation we associate with the socialist period of the development of Bulgarian parliamentary practice. Unlike the other standing committees, the legislative committee is not branch-specific and does not consider proposals relating only to the relevant branch of the economy.

The last large group of parliamentary committees are the special committees related to the control exercised by the National Assembly over the executive bodies. They are of three main types. These varieties are discussed in detail in their common features and in terms of differences between them. The specifics, organization and order of their activities, as well as the range of powers, composition, leadership, legal nature and historical examples in the Bulgarian constitutional practice have been studied.

The four separate systems of formation of inquiry committees that have arisen historically have also been examined according to the order and the act on the basis of which they are elected - by parliamentary resolution, after voting on a special law on the case, after adoption of a general law, by regulation in the rules of procedure of the legislative body.

§ 2. Constitution, forms of work and order of activity.

The order of election of parliamentary committees depends on the type of committee concerned. Standing committees, for example, are one of the constituent elements of a newly elected National Assembly, which elects them during one of its first sessions.

The nature of the parliamentary committees as collective bodies with their own staff consisting of leadership and members has been clarified. The different systems for determining committee leadership are discussed, as well as the various positions included in this concept. According to the first system, operating in the years of the Tarnovo constitution, the committees have the powers to choose their leadership from among themselves. The second system, which operates with the Constitution of 1947. and still applies today, provides that the National Assembly elects both the members of the committees and their leadership. The leadership of the parliamentary committees by the chairman and vice-chairmen was discussed, clarifying their mandate, role and place in the work process of the committees.

Considered in the dissertation is the structure of the parliamentary committees, which as a rule is one-dimensional, but the regulatory framework often foresees the possibility of creating separate subdivisions, which bear the names of sections - in the regime of the Tarnovo Constitution, and subcommittees - with the subsequent constitutional and legal texts , including in the current Constitution of 1991.

The forms of work of the committees and the order of their conduct are examined - meetings (regular and extraordinary), joint meetings, hearings, inspections and studies, as well as the quorum in its varieties and the majority for adopting a decision in individual historical periods and nowadays - with a relative majority, with an absolute majority.

Particular attention is paid to the imposed practice during the period of restrictions dictated by health reasons in 2020, for holding online meetings of the parliamentary committees, and the opportunities provided by modern technologies are analyzed and should be used to optimize the work of the National Assembly.

§ 3. Powers of the committees, role in the legislative process and in the exercise of political control. Acts. Administration of the committees.

In science, it is accepted that the powers of the parliamentary committees are derived from those of the National Assembly. The committees in the current regime do not have their own authority. Two systems of participation of the committees in the legislative process have been derived - through temporary legislative committees (which are elected for the consideration of each individual law) or through permanent committees. In our country, the principle of consideration of the bill by the standing committees has been adopted. Depending on the obligation of each draft law to be examined by a committee, we distinguish between countries in which the drafts are imperatively subject to examination by committees and those in which this is optional. According to the number of votes on the texts in meetings, we distinguish adoption of the law in one, two or three readings.

There are two more modes of discussion of bills in committees, according to the stage at which it is carried out. In the first, which is characteristic of the Bulgarian system as well, the draft laws, before reaching the threshold of the plenary hall for the first reading, are first discussed in the standing committees - i.e. the stage of consideration in a committee, precedes the discussion in the plenary hall of the first reading. The other model envisages that the bill will first go to the plenary for the first reading, after which it will be sent to the relevant committee.

The form in which the draft law is considered in the standing committees is the discussion, with the Bulgarian legislative process being carefully discussed with the participation of the standing committees in it.

The thesis is advocated that the Bulgarian parliament, allowing a bill to be radically changed during the deliberations in the committees, contradicts the logic of the legislative process, which includes a referral to the National Assembly by the subjects expressly defined in the Constitution with a legislative initiative.

The other major function, in the implementation of which the committees of the National Assembly assist it, is the control function. In the performance of these tasks, the committees exercise an auxiliary form of control over the politically responsible Council of Ministers. The notion that the control of standing committees can be implemented in three different forms - as preliminary, current and subsequent, depending on the temporal relation in which it is carried out - has been examined.

The control carried out in our country by the parliamentary committees is an auxiliary form of political control. However, this does not give them the quality of an independent subject of control. Its holder in the modern constitutional order remains the National Assembly in its plenary composition. As a result of the implementation of each of the forms of parliamentary control of the committees, it is not possible to objectify the political responsibility of the government before the parliament.

Examples from the regulations of the National Assembly were discussed, providing at the beginning of the meetings of the standing committees that the relevant ministers appear and answer topical oral questions asked by members of the committees at the meeting itself. State bodies and officials from the state and municipal administration, as well as every citizen, are required to provide, upon request, all information and documents, as well as opinions, necessary for the activities of the committees within the period specified by them, as well as to appear at meetings, when this does not prejudice the principle of separation of powers.

The research does not support the understanding that the actions of the Council of Ministers on the implementation of EU law go beyond the scope of the parliamentary control exercised by the National Assembly. It is maintained that, when exercising their auxiliary control powers, the standing committees can monitor the government's policy in implementing the decisions of the institutions of the European Union.

In practice, attention has been paid to the question of the constitutionality of the granting of powers to the Committee on Parliamentary Ethics to the National Assembly to discuss and give an opinion on the cases of incompatibility of a representative of the people with the performance of another state office or with the performance of an activity which, according to the law, is incompatible with the status of a national representative within the meaning of art. 68, para. 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, incl. of the practice of the Constitutional Court.

The acts of the Committees in the National Assembly were examined. Characteristic of them, with some exceptions related to the exercise of control, is that they are not legally binding for their addressees, respectively they do not provide for sanctioning consequences of their non-fulfilment. The legal effect of the acts of the committees in the National Assembly is related only to the proper referral to the relevant authority.

It was concluded that parliamentary committees adopt only one type of legal acts - decisions. They contain individual or general legal prescriptions, concern separate issues and have a one-time legal effect. The decisions of the committees are adopted in one reading with a simple majority and enter into force from the moment of their adoption. The form of acts is only written.

The opinion that this work supports is that the committees of the National Assembly cannot accept declarations and addresses, which conclusion is justified and defended in the research.

In the dissertation work, a separate place is allocated to the role, structure and activity of the administration, supporting the work of the parliamentary committees. The Bulgarian parliamentary administration is divided into directorates, independent departments, independent sectors, employees of the office of the President of the National Assembly and of the offices of the vice-presidents of the National Assembly, employees of the parliamentary groups and the secretary-general, which are carefully examined.

According to the functions performed by the administration of parliamentary committees, we can distinguish a connecting function (integrating function in American literature) and an expert or even consulting function.

§ 4. Powers, functions and tasks of the Bulgarian parliamentary committees in the context of Bulgaria's participation in the construction of the European Union.

This section examines the new powers that the National Assembly acquires in terms of control over the Council of Ministers in the implementation of the acts of the European institutions.

In this context, parliamentary committees acquire new responsibilities. The present work supports the understanding that the National Assembly and its committees - specifically the Committee on European Union Affairs - participate in the European legislative process in its second phase - the discussion of European bills as an activity of formulating political support and making proposals for amendments, additions and other revisions. As for the legislative initiative, voting and promulgation, the Bulgarian legislature does not take part in these phases.

The second thesis comes down to the conclusion that the National Assembly and its committees exercise control only in relation to the Council of Ministers, leading and implementing the policy of the Republic of Bulgaria as a member state of the European Union, but not in relation to the European Commission or other institutions. In its activity of exercising these responsibilities, the National Assembly is assisted by a special committee - the Committee on European Union Affairs - an auxiliary body that carries out parliamentary control and monitoring on matters related to the European Union.

 This committee has a special place in the Bulgarian parliamentary model. In the context of the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union, the committee realizes significant powers of its own, which the National Assembly has explicitly granted to it with its Rules of procedure. Such are the powers of the Committee in the phase of discussion of a European legislative project - a positive opinion with which the consultation procedure ends or the imposition of a parliamentary reservation - a unilateral authoritative statement, immediately giving rise to certain legal consequences.

The Bulgarian model of participation of the Parliament and its committees in the legislative process includes legal institutes and procedures, within which the National Assembly and its Committee on European Union Affairs are sought to be informed in advance about upcoming legislative initiatives, the obtaining of principled political support in explicitly listed hypotheses and the possibility of influencing the legislative process.

The positive legal regulation in Bulgaria provides for prior and subsequent informing of the Parliament by the Council of Ministers, an expression of which is the obligation of Art. 105, para. 4 of the Constitution, according to which, when developing and adopting acts of the European Union, the Council of Ministers should inform the National Assembly in advance and report on its actions afterwards.

The European legislative process, in its phases and the participation of the Committee on European Union Affairs in it, were discussed.

The first phase - the preliminary consultation, begins with the preparation by the European Commission of the Work Program, which contains the main priorities of the Commission and the legislative acts that are planned to be adopted in implementation of the same. Based on this document of the Commission, by January 31 of the current year, the Council of Ministers adopts its Annual Program for the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the decision-making process in the European Union.

The National Assembly uses the information from these two documents to prepare its Annual Work Program on EU Affairs, reflecting a list of the draft acts of the EU institutions that it intends to monitor and control during the relevant year. The parliamentary Committee on European Union Affairs has a central role in the process of preparing and adopting the program.

The draft Annual Work Program of the National Assembly on EU Affairs is prepared by the Committee on European Union Affairs. The inclusion of a separate legislative initiative in the program has an important legal significance in accordance with the Rules of procedure - it is a positive procedural prerequisite for imposing a parliamentary reservation on a draft act of the European Union by the Committee on European Union Affairs and for taking action in the event of a finding of non-compliance on the principle of subsidiarity. The understanding that the non-inclusion of a bill in the program precludes the possibility of imposing a parliamentary reservation on it is not shared.

The practice of accepting the above-mentioned documents in our country was studied, which was assessed ambiguously. The general conclusion that emerges is that in this preliminary phase of the European legislative process, the National Assembly approaches formally, which leads to ineffective interaction in the next phase of the process - in the discussion part.

The discussion phase of the European legislative acts was considered. All draft acts of the European Union institutions are discussed in the Committee on European Union Affairs, which has the leading role.

The authority of the Committee on European Union Affairs, in the event that the majority has objections to the adoption of the legislative act proposed by an institution of the European Union, to impose a parliamentary reservation on the project has been examined. The parliamentary reservation essentially represents a legally binding authoritative statement of the committee, which obliges the government not to express an opinion on the draft act in the Council of the European Union until the National Assembly consider it.

The Committee on European Union Affairs has another essential authority in the event of a finding that it is not possible to maintain the draft legislative act within the discussion phase - the check for compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, the result is linked to the legal obligations of the institutions of the European Union union.

The second important function of the National Assembly, which acquires new dimensions with Bulgaria's participation in the European Union, is the control function. In its implementation, the Bulgarian Parliament is actively supported by the Committee on European Union Affairs, which questions ministers on issues related to the adoption of draft acts of the EU institutions included in their competence.

The Committee on European Affairs also exercises parliamentary control over the activities of the government in the management of funds from European funds and programs, it also receives information from European institutions without specific control functions arising from this.

Only the Committee on European Affairs conducts hearings for candidates for positions in the EU institutions proposed by the Council of Ministers.

§ 5. The committees in the European Parliament and their role in the Bulgarian constitutional order.

The ability of the EP to exercise power directly on the territory of Bulgaria necessitates a brief discussion of the legal status of its auxiliary bodies - the European parliamentary committees, insofar as they indirectly participate in the Bulgarian political process. Studying them also has its significance in a comparative legal aspect - insofar as the experience of European countries is summarized in their construction and new forms of work are introduced. The importance of the research on the issues of the committees in the EP is manifested in another aspect - the reception of useful models and good practices contributing to the improvement of the work of the Bulgarian auxiliary bodies in the National Assembly.

The normative sources regulating the organization of the activity, the order and forms of work of the committees in the European Parliament were examined - the founding treaties, the Act on the election of members of the European Parliament and the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament.

This section examines the personnel composition of the committees, the management, forms of work, quorum, majorities, the ways of carrying out the functions of the European Parliament - directly through the plenary session, and through its auxiliary bodies - the committees. The types of committees in the EP are discussed, such as standing, special (temporary), inquiry and joint parliamentary committees, which are carefully discussed in their supranational dimension, in the context of European Union law.

The specific role of the Council of Committee Chairmen in the process of implementing the competences of the European Parliament is examined. Analyzed and discussed as good practice are the figures of reserve members, rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs, as well as committee coordinators.

There are two modes of creating a subcommittee in the European Parliament - formation of subcommittees according to the general rules and the second, simplified mode, in which any permanent or special committee can, with prior permission from the Council of Presidents, create such subcommittees.

The legislative process in the EP, which is organized according to the Bulgarian model, was discussed, and the role and place of the committees in it were clarified. The special procedures in this process, such as the work of the so-called associated committees, were examined when, when determining a leading committees, the President's Council found that the issue falls almost equally within the competence of two or more committees. Then there are several procedural deviations from the standard rules.

The practice has also been clarified, in which, in the course of a dispute over competence between individual standing committees, the authority to consider such a case rests with the Council of Committee Chairmen.

The special rules for the quorum of the meetings and the adoption of the decisions of the committees under the so-called "high threshold" (one fifth of all MEPs, including one or more political groups or individual MEPs, or a combination of both), "low threshold" (one twentieth of all MEPs or a political group) and "medium threshold' (one tenth of all MEPs, including one or more political groups or individual MEPs, or a combination of both).

The committees in the European Parliament do not exercise political control over the Bulgarian national authorities. The control of the European Parliament is directed towards the European Commission and in its forms resembles that exercised by the national parliaments towards their executive authorities. In this regard, the committees in the EP, like their national counterparts, carry out only an auxiliary form of control, the purpose of which is to obtain information about the activities of the executive bodies. Two forms of control by the European Parliament are distinguished - control for the purpose of information and sanction control, which essentially falls under the means of realizing the political responsibility of the European Commission.

The committees in the European Parliament also play a significant role in the implementation of the last major group of powers of the EP - constitutive powers. Among these powers are the appointment of members of the Court of Auditors, the Executive Board of the European Central Bank and other higher bodies. The candidates for these positions are invited to make a statement before the competent committees and answer the questions put to them by its members, after which the committee votes secretly and separately on each of the candidacies, and based on the voting forms recommendations to the EP regarding the appointment.

**III. Contributory moments of the dissertation work.**

The dissertation carefully examines its subject in order to improve scientific knowledge with a view to building a dynamic and optimal political system that will ensure the preservation and development of the Bulgarian state. The scientific knowledge in the field of the development of the system of parliamentary committees during the operation of the Tarnovo Constitution, which goes through defined three independent stages, has been supplemented.

The research defends the thesis that the current regime of parliamentary committees in our country is the optimal one, and the "steps to the side" related to the vivid strengthening of their powers or, on the contrary, their depersonalization, are wrong. Reached the conclusion of the inapplicability and inappropriateness of institutions such as the mixed committees, the delegation of powers from the plenary session to the committees or to the special committees performing the functions of a legislative assembly during the time it is not in session.

Proposals de lege ferenda were also made. In a future comprehensive revision of the constitutional texts, the proposal Art. 79 of the Constitution to be edited in the spirit that the National Assembly elects from its composition permanent and temporary committees that assist the Assembly. In this way, clarity will be brought to the text, the current version of which states that permanent committees support the activities of the National Assembly and exercise parliamentary control on its behalf, while temporary committees are elected for studies and polls.

Proposals for changes to the Rules for the Organization and Activities of the National Assembly can also be considered. The dissertation pays attention to the Bulgarian parliamentary practice for radical change during the discussions, incl. of the committees, of a draft law with which the National Assembly has been referred, so that it does not correspond to the intentions of the original text. In this way, the will of the subjects of a legislative initiative has completely changed, and the committees de facto appropriate this right without being empowered with similar competences by the Bulgarian Basic Law. Therefore, there should be a place for the obligation of the National Assembly to rule on every single legislative initiative submitted by the appropriate entities under Art. 87, para. 1 of the Constitution without having the opportunity to compile individual texts and thus create a new draft law.

The dissertation seeks to open the debate about the new responsibilities that the committees should assume in the light of the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the construction of the European Union. The author tries to impose several views in this direction. First of all, this is the understanding that the actions of the Council of Ministers on the implementation of EU law fall within the scope of the parliamentary control exercised by the National Assembly, and the Bulgarian constitutional order with a parliamentary form of government does not allow the government to pursue a policy that does not is subject to control and as a result political responsibility cannot be realized, including if it was agreed at the EU Council level by the Bulgarian government. Therefore, when implementing their auxiliary control powers, the standing committees can not only monitor the level of utilization and the appropriate and lawful spending of funds from the funds and programs of the European Union, but also monitor the government's policy in implementing the decisions of the institutions of The European Union.

There are also arguments that the National Assembly is not a subject of the legislative process of the European Union, but is consulted during the consideration of a legislative proposal, and in certain cases can also be the initiator of legislation. This necessitates that this procedure be aligned with the current constitutional regime for the adoption of laws, by creating a provision regarding the power of the National Assembly in accordance with the treaties of the European Union together with the competent institutions of other member states to initiate the adoption of a legislative act.

Next, the dimensions related to Bulgaria's participation in the European Union give new powers to the National Assembly regarding the control function in the spirit of Art. 105, para. 3 and para. 4 of the Constitution. The author maintains the thesis that the transfer of some of the functions currently performed by the Committee on European Union Affairs to the plenary should be seriously considered. Among them are the procedures for hearing ministers on issues related to the adoption of draft acts of the EU institutions, the hearing of candidates for positions in the EU institutions proposed by the Council of Ministers, the control over the activities of the Council on European Affairs at the Council of Ministers, etc. . structural units.

In addition, de lege ferenda should be discussed the idea of formulating and adopting the relevant legal norms to formulate political support on the part of the National Assembly regarding the Bulgarian position in the EU Council. The aim is to legitimizing the European legislative process in terms of the Bulgarian constitution.

A conclusion that the dissertation seeks to defend is the understanding that parliamentary committees cannot issue non-legal acts - declarations and addresses, similar to the plenum of the National Assembly.

As positive examples, which could be well received in the Bulgarian parliamentary practice, are the figures of reserve members and committee coordinators.

The possibility of regulating a procedure should be discussed in case of competence disputes between standing committees in relation to the question of which one is leading. In this regard, the idea of enriching the parliamentary practice with the emergence of the institution of the council of committee chairmen, which would consider the dispute and pronounce its decision, would be appropriate.

Finally, the opportunities provided by modern telecommunications and information technologies should be used to optimize the work of the National Assembly and its committees. For this purpose, de lege ferenda can also discuss the idea of using programs for processing audio technical data in text format - voice to text, which will save shorthand resources and increase the volume of information available to citizens. Attention should also be paid to the potential of using artificial intelligence in the assessment of the impact of laws, as well as to the development of legal technique and avoiding the introduction of contradictory concepts and legal terms into legislation.

**IV. List of publications on the topic.**

1. The National Assembly and the Committee on European Affairs and Control of the European funds in the context of the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the construction of the European Union, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023.
2. Committees in the European Parliament - types, competence, organization and order of activity, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023.
3. The development of the Bulgarian parliamentary committees in the period 1879–1991, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023.