

To
The Chairperson of the Scientific Jury,
Appointed by Order No. RD-22-1523 / 27.07.2026
24 Tzar Asen St.
4000 Plovdiv

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariya Valkova Hristozova, Medical University – Plovdiv, Faculty of Public Health, Department of Health Care Management, Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.6 Law

Subject: Dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field: 3.6 Law, *Doctoral Program "Constitutional Law"*.

Author of the Dissertation: Todor Ivanov Rogoshev – Full-time PhD student at the Department of Public Law Sciences, Faculty of Law, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

Title of the Dissertation: "Acquisition of citizenship in the Republic of Bulgaria: constitutional and international legal aspects"

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. DSc. Veselin Hristov Tsankov

Reason for submitting the Opinion: Order No. RD-22-1523 / 27.07.2026 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" and a decision of the scientific jury, taken under Protocol No.1 / 23.07.2026

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,

By Order No. RD-22-1523 / 27.07.2026 issued by the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", I have been appointed as an external member of the Scientific Jury in the procedure for the defense of the dissertation entitled "Acquisition of citizenship in the Republic of Bulgaria: constitutional and international legal aspects" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree „**Doctor**“ (PhD) in the field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field: 3.6. Law, doctoral program "Constitutional Law".

I hereby present this opinion, having been commissioned by a decision of the esteemed Scientific Jury at its inaugural meeting, Protocol No. 1 / 23.07.2026, to prepare an opinion of the submitted dissertation for the acquisition of the dissertation and the accompanying set of documents.

I. Brief biographical data on the PhD candidate

Todor Ivanov Rogoshev acquired his Master's Degree in Law in 2021 from the Faculty of Law of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". In 2022, he earned a second Master's degree (LL.M.) specialised in Public International Law from Leiden University, the Netherlands. From 2023 to the present, he has been an assistant in constitutional law at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", where he pursues active teaching and research activities. His professional background further encompasses practical experience as an intern in the Legal Division of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (2022-2023) and as a junior researcher at the Institute for Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology „Prof. Aleksandar Fol“ at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2021). Todor Rogoshev is a registered mediator in the Unified Register of Mediators. He is fluent in English and French.

The academic and professional pursuits of the candidate are distinguished by exceptional activity and high achievements. Todor Rogoshev has achieved remarkable successes as a participant, coach, and judge in prestigious international and national law moot court competitions, including the Philip C. Jessup and the ICC Moot Court Competition. He is an accomplished debater with numerous awards (e.g., Amsterdam Open 2022, BDA Open 2023, etc.). His strong civic and professional commitment is further demonstrated by his mandate as the UN Youth Delegate of Bulgaria (2020-2021), as well as his active organisational and mentorship roles within the Student Legal Science Academy, the National Student Mediation Competition, and various other projects.

II. General description of the submitted materials

The candidate has submitted a full set of documents as required by the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), the Regulations for its Implementation and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". The abstract accurately reflects the core characteristics and findings of the research, providing a clear overview of its subject matter, aims and objectives, methodology applied, topicality of the examined problem, scientific novelty, and the practical significance of the results obtained. The abstract has been translated into a foreign language traditionally used within this professional field. A reference list of the candidate's publications has been provided – totaling 3 works, thereby fulfilling the minimum national requirements. Consequently, the procedure is admissible for substantive review before the Scientific Jury.

III. Topicality and significance of the researched topic

The topic under investigation is exceptionally topical in both theoretical and applied scientific terms. Citizenship is not merely a static legal bond between an individual and a state, but a dynamic institution whose normative regulation must continuously adapt to shifting geopolitical, social, and economic realities. Accordingly, this scholarly work – which presents an in-depth analysis of the acquisition of citizenship through the prism of constitutional, administrative, international, and European Union law – possesses high theoretical value. An adequate legal framework governing citizenship is of paramount importance at the national, international, and European levels alike. Given that the acquisition

of citizenship of a European Union Member State entails the simultaneous acquisition of Union citizenship, the decisions of the national legislature may generate legal consequences extending far beyond the scope of domestic law.

The significance of the study is further underscored by the necessity to guarantee the legal order and the protection of fundamental rights, particularly within the context of heightened migratory pressure, global mobility, and the safeguarding of state national security. The thesis demonstrates high practical applicability by successfully highlighting existing gaps concerning procedural guarantees, judicial review, the verification of Bulgarian origin, and the protection of individuals exposed to the risk of statelessness, while concurrently formulating well-reasoned *de lege ferenda* proposals for their resolution.

IV. General characteristics and structure of the dissertation

Structurally, the submitted dissertation is 283 pages long, includes a title page, abstract, preface, table of contents, introduction, five chapters, conclusion and a bibliography. The structure is logical and coherent, facilitating a smooth transition from general theoretical issues concerning the institution of citizenship to an analysis of the effective normative framework in the Republic of Bulgaria, its practical application, and a critical evaluation of its compliance with international and European standards. The thesis sets forth clearly formulated theses and well-argued propositions. The bibliography encompasses a broad array of sources, including specialised literature in Bulgarian and English, international, European, and national regulatory acts, official documents, and case law (including rulings of the International Court of Justice, the ECtHR, the CJEU, etc.). The impressive number of footnotes (687) reflects the author's diligence, conscientiousness, and precision in achieving a comprehensive and thorough investigation of the topic.

The introduction defines the principal aim of the scientific research as conducting a comprehensive and critical analysis of the substantive and procedural aspects of citizenship acquisition in the Republic of Bulgaria in the light of constitutional law, international law, and European Union law. The tasks required to successfully achieve this objective are clearly and precisely outlined. The object of the study is citizenship as an institution of constitutional and international law, whereas its subject matter focuses on the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship through its substantive prerequisites and procedural dimensions.

To accomplish the set goals and tasks, the thesis employs a complex **methodology** comprising a set of complementary general and special scientific methods, namely: the legal-dogmatic, doctrinal, comparative-legal, and sociological-axiological methods, alongside an empirical method in the form of field research. The legal-dogmatic method serves as the primary approach, through which the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Citizenship Act, subordinate legislation, international treaties, European Union legal acts in the field, and relevant case law have been examined. Alongside this, doctrinal and comparative-legal methods were utilised to benchmark the national legal framework against established international standards and solutions adopted in other legal systems. The empirical approach applied via field research within institutions possessing statutory powers in citizenship-related proceedings deserves positive recognition, as it contrasts normative analysis with the actual functioning of the system and practical challenges. Furthermore, the study incorporates artificial intelligence-based tools as an auxiliary instrument for information

processing and analysis. A primary emphasis is placed upon the various modes of citizenship acquisition, their systematic placement, function, and practical application.

Chapter One, entitled „General Aspects of Citizenship“, serves a theoretical function aimed at elucidating the substantive dimensions of citizenship and its systematic place in national and international law. The candidate skillfully clarifies the essence of the institution of citizenship, traces its historical evolution, and analyses its various dimensions – as a legal status, a legal relationship and a human right. The candidate correctly approaches the differentiation of citizenship from cognate concepts such as ethnicity, people, and nation, given that their precise clarification is essential for the correct interpretation of the legal framework.

Chapter Two is dedicated to the sources of law regulating citizenship matters. An independent contribution is represented by the extensive overview of international legal instruments, the historical development of the citizenship regulatory framework in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the derivation of general and special principles of law applicable to the institution.

Chapter Three explores the significance and practical application of citizenship, including its role in the existence and functioning of the state, its place within constitutional, international, and European Union law, as well as an analysis of citizenship as a prerequisite for the exercise of fundamental rights and duties.

Chapter Four holds foundational significance for the subject matter of the research and exhibits the highest contributory value from a general theoretical perspective. It analyses the modes of acquiring citizenship by birth and by naturalization, including general and privileged forms of naturalization. A comprehensive and systematized overview is provided regarding the framework of proceedings for the establishment, loss, and restoration of citizenship, the competencies of respective state organs, and the legal nature of their acts. Special attention is devoted to issues concerning the availability of judicial review over acts within the reviewed sphere, wherein the author's conclusions possess high practical applicability.

Chapter Five presents a critical analysis of the current regulatory framework governing citizenship in the Republic of Bulgaria through the lens of international law, European Union law and international human rights standards. It traces the risks arising from the divergence between citizenship and nationality, the lack of effective administrative and judicial control, and the reservations maintained by the Republic of Bulgaria regarding the European Convention on Nationality. It also discusses issues related to child protection and the prevention of statelessness, for which the legislature must find timely solutions. This thorough critical analysis is distinguished by a pronounced contributory character.

The dissertation concludes with a **summary** of the scientific results and the formulation of well-substantiated ***de lege ferenda* proposals** for the enhancement of the legislative framework.

V. Contributions and significance of the work for science and practice

The submitted dissertation constitutes an independent, in-depth and original scientific study of a significant problem within the realms of constitutional and international law. The acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship is an exceptionally topical and interdisciplinary subject that engages essential theoretical and practical issues, necessitating an adequate legal

framework at the international, regional, and national levels. The exposition is systematic and consistent, with individual sections establishing a logical nexus between theoretical postulates, the analysis of active law, and its critical evaluation. The analysis of the legal nature of citizenship and the distinction drawn between citizenship and nationality merit positive appraisal. The candidate convincingly demonstrates the significance of this distinction both for domestic law and for the international legal recognition of the bond between an individual and a state. He displays a profound grasp of the theoretical foundation and literature concerning the researched problem, raising well-founded questions regarding the nature of acts issued in citizenship proceedings, the role of individual state organs, the degree of administrative discretion, and the scope for judicial review. His conclusion regarding existing gaps and imperfections in the citizenship regulatory framework, and the necessity for its improvement, is fully justified.

The primary and exceptionally valuable scientific and practical-applied contributions of the thesis may be summarised as follows:

- A comprehensive and in-depth study of the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship, combining constitutional, international and European legal perspectives;
- The distinction established between citizenship, nationality, and other cognate concepts, alongside the clarification of their significance for the international legal recognition of citizenship and institutions such as diplomatic protection;
- The investigation of citizenship as a multidimensional public-law institution - operating as a legal status, a legal relationship and an element of the human rights system;
- An extensive overview of international legal instruments and domestic citizenship regulations, coupled with the derivation of general and special legal principles applicable to the institution;
- An examination of the modes of acquiring citizenship by birth and naturalization (including general and privileged forms of naturalization), as well as the content of the notion of „origin“ under effective legislation;
- A systematized overview of citizenship-related proceedings, the competencies of competent state organs, the character of their acts, and the avenues for judicial review, evaluated simultaneously from the standpoints of substantive law, administrative process, and constitutional guarantees;
- A critical assessment of Bulgarian legislation and its compliance with international and European human rights standards, including matters of child protection.

The de lege ferenda proposals for legislative amendments are well-argued and attest to the applicability of the candidate's theoretical conclusions, thereby reaffirming the high scientific value of the work within the field of law.

Additional contributory moments and practical results are also embedded within the remaining candidate publications submitted under the procedure.

No evidence of plagiarism or unlawful appropriation of third-party authorial works has been established, nor have any plagiarism alerts been filed.

VI. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks concerning the content of the materials submitted in this procedure. I recommend that the candidate continue his scholarly research in the field of citizenship, as the topic will retain its topicality in view of the dynamic evolution of international, European and national law.

VII. Conclusion

The submitted dissertation entitled "**Acquisition of citizenship in the Republic of Bulgaria: constitutional and international legal aspects**", authored by **Todor Ivanov Rogoshev**, contains scientific, applied-scientific and practical results that represent an original contribution to science and satisfy all requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its implementation and the respective Rules of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". The submitted materials and the dissertation itself demonstrate that the PhD candidate Todor Ivanov Rogoshev possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge in the fields of international, constitutional, European and national law, as well as the capacity to conduct independent scholarly research and critical analysis.

On the basis of the above, I conclusively render my positive evaluation of the submitted dissertation and propose that the honourable scientific jury award Todor Ivanov Rogoshev the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the Higher education area 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional direction 3.6 Law, doctoral program "Constitutional Law".

31.08.2026

Prepared the opinion:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariya Hristozova)