

REVIEW

by

Prof. Dr. Plamen Veselinov Kirov

on a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree

DOCTOR

Field of higher education: Social, Economic and Legal Sciences (3).

Professional field: Law (3.6)

Scientific specialty: Constitutional Law

Author of the dissertation:

TODOR IVANOV ROGOSHEV,

full-time doctoral student at the Department of Public Law Sciences
of the Faculty of Law of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

Title of the dissertation:

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA: CONSTITUTIONAL-LAW AND INTERNATIONAL-LAW ASPECTS

Scientific supervisor:

Prof., Dr. of Economic Sciences Veselin Tsankov

Dear Members of the Academic Jury,

By Order No. RD 22-1523/27.07.2026 of the Rector of PU “Paisii Hilendarski”, I was appointed a member of the academic jury for the defence of the dissertation of doctoral student Todor Ivanov Rogoshev entitled: “Acquisition of Citizenship in the Republic of Bulgaria: Constitutional-Law and International Law Aspects”, and at the first meeting of the jury I was assigned to prepare a review. In implementation of the Rector’s order and the decision of the academic jury, and guided by the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation, I hereby submit to the members of the academic jury the following findings and conclusions, together with the conclusion reasoned on their basis.

I declare that I have no scholarly works co-authored with the doctoral student.

Todor Rogoshev graduated from the Faculty of Law of PU “Paisii Hilendarski” in 2021 with a Master’s degree in Law. In 2021, he worked at the Institute of Balkan Studies with the Center of Thracology “Prof. Alexander Fol” of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In 2021/2022, he specialised at Leiden University in a Master’s programme in Public International Law. In 2022 and 2023, he was an intern in the Legal Affairs Division of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Since 2023, he has been an Assistant Professor of Constitutional Law at the Faculty of Law of PU “Paisii Hilendarski”.

During the period of his full-time doctoral studies, Todor Rogoshev passed all examinations required under the doctoral minimum for the specialty in accordance with his individual study plan.

The doctoral student has prepared a dissertation containing scientific and applied scientific results that constitute an original contribution to

scholarship and demonstrate in-depth theoretical knowledge in the relevant specialty, as well as the ability to conduct independent scholarly research in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB).

Todor Rogoshev has submitted a set of documents comprising a dissertation abstract; curriculum vitae; a copy of his higher education diploma; orders for the enrolment and discharge of the doctoral student; the dissertation; a list and copies of the scholarly publications related to the dissertation; a statement of contributions; a declaration of originality and authenticity; and a report on fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the ZRASRB.

Todor Rogoshev has submitted three scholarly articles related to the dissertation, published in established academic journals.

The dissertation “Acquisition of Citizenship in the Republic of Bulgaria: Constitutional-Law and International-Law Aspects” is 390 pages in length. It consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. It contains 687 footnotes and cites sources in Bulgarian, English, German and French. The doctoral student has also referred to and examined judgments of the

European Court of Human Rights, judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union, decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria, and judgments of Bulgarian courts. The work is structured consistently and logically, which, as a rule, excludes repetitions and gaps in the exposition.

The topical relevance of the subject is determined by the dynamic development of interstate relations connected with freedom of movement and choice of residence, in the context of contemporary theories concerning the national character of the modern state and the definition of citizenship as a

normative complex closely linked to the principle of popular sovereignty. It has theoretical, legal-normative and practical-applied dimensions. The relevance of the subject to contemporary democratic constitutional systems and the manner in which it is formulated require historical-legal and comparative-legal research into the subject matter, related to the development, entrenchment and consolidation of citizenship as a value, as well as to the prevailing understanding in legal theory of citizenship in its material sense as belonging. The formation and development of the institution of citizenship in its contemporary context and its introduction into constitutional practice, the general theoretical conceptualisation and analysis of the legal framework have been strongly influenced by specific political processes in individual constitutional democracies. Addressed as an independent subject and through the approach adopted by the doctoral student, the dissertation contributes to constitutional-law scholarship, as it examines aspects of citizenship that have been little studied or not studied at all to date, and presents for the first time a comprehensive and all-encompassing treatment of the subject not only from the perspective of constitutional law, but also from its international-law dimension.

Todor Rogoshev demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the field, employing a rich methodological toolkit – the historical-legal, comparative-law, systemic, structural-functional and legal-dogmatic methods. This makes it possible to explore the subject in depth while at the same time covering the broad range of issues related to the constitutional entrenchment of the institution of citizenship and its functioning within the constitutional-law system. The author's in-depth knowledge of constitutional and comparative constitutional law, as well as of constitutional history, makes it possible to conduct a thorough legal study of the numerous aspects entailed by the subject of the dissertation. The in-depth knowledge demonstrated by Todor

Rogoshev in the fields of administrative and public international law also makes it possible to apply successfully an interdisciplinary approach in the construction of the scholarly work

The subject matter of the work is the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship, examined in its constitutional-law and international-law aspects. The place of citizenship as an institution within the broader system of public law is sought, and in this sense it is examined as a legal status, a legal relationship, and an institution establishing a lasting legal bond between the individual and the state. The main attention is directed to the means of acquiring Bulgarian citizenship, the substantive legal prerequisites, the proceedings before the competent state authorities, and the legal consequences of acquisition. Related proceedings are also addressed – the establishment, loss and restoration of Bulgarian citizenship, insofar as they form part of a comprehensive understanding of the institution.

In the dissertation, citizenship is considered as a lasting legal bond between the individual and the state. In domestic law, it is a prerequisite for the exercise of certain rights and the assumption of obligations. In international law, citizenship is the basis for recognising an individual's belonging to a state, including in the context of diplomatic protection of the rights and interests of individuals. As regards the political aspect of European integration, national citizenship is a prerequisite for the acquisition of citizenship of the European Union. The acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship is examined through the substantive legal prerequisites, the procedural mechanisms implemented by the competent state authorities, the nature of legal acts, and the practical application of the applicable legal framework, including with regard to its conformity with the Constitution, international law and EU law. The subject of the research includes the means of acquiring Bulgarian citizenship by descent, by place of birth and by naturalisation.

In the first chapter of the dissertation, citizenship is examined as a complex public-law framework in three principal dimensions – legal status, legal relationship and human right. Attention is focused on a general characterisation of citizenship, examining its concept, significance and historical development as a legal institution. The exposition traces the transition from archaic forms of personal dependence, including subjecthood, to the modern understanding of citizenship in the democratic nation-state. A key element of the research is the distinction between citizenship and related concepts – ethnic, religious and national affiliation, nationality and citizenship. Particular attention is devoted to the correspondence between citizenship and nationality in the context of domestic and international law.

The second chapter examines the sources of law governing citizenship. It analyses the principal instruments of the international legal framework relating to citizenship and statelessness, beginning with the 1930 Hague Convention and extending to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Nationality. Instruments relating to non-discrimination, family status and the protection of vulnerable groups are also examined. The significance of the Maastricht Treaty and the functioning of European citizenship are analysed. High praise is due to the identification of the principles applicable to the regulation of citizenship – legal certainty, equality, non-discrimination, avoidance of statelessness, a genuine link between the individual and the state, special protection of children, and others. These principles acquire particular importance both in the creation of the legal framework and in its interpretation and application.

The third chapter is devoted to the significance and practical application of the institution of citizenship. First and foremost, citizenship is analysed as a legal phenomenon in relation to the nation-state and its social substrate – the

specific society as a state-forming element. In this way, the circle of persons who belong to the state and participate in its political and legal community and identity is delineated. From this follows the significance of citizenship for the functioning of popular sovereignty, political representation and the exercise of public authority. Considerable attention is devoted to the legal framework that makes citizenship a condition for the exercise of rights to hold public office, as well as for the imposition of obligations towards society and the state.

Chapter Five – “International-Law Standards and Their Application in the Legal Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria on the Acquisition of Bulgarian Citizenship” – has a critical and evaluative character. It examines the existing national framework governing the acquisition of citizenship through the prism of international law and EU law. Considerable attention is devoted to the impact of the legal framework contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and its influence on the application of national legislation. The European Convention on Nationality, its principal provisions, and the reservations with which the Republic of Bulgaria ratified it are analysed separately. The question of the admissibility of these reservations and their impact on reasoning, transparency and control in citizenship-granting proceedings is addressed.

In the conclusion of the dissertation, the results of the research are summarised, with the main conclusion being that the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship cannot be regarded solely as a matter falling within the exclusive competence of the state. According to Todor Rogoshev, citizenship is an institution at the intersection of multiple branches of law – constitutional law, administrative law, international law and EU law.

The dissertation addresses current issues related to the legal regime of citizenship, the withdrawal of the reservations of the Republic of Bulgaria to

the European Convention on Nationality, the introduction of administrative and judicial review of certain acts and intermediate actions in naturalisation proceedings, the reconsideration of the substantive conditions for privileged naturalisation, the legislative clarification of the concept of “descent” in the Bulgarian Citizenship Act, and others. Todor Rogoshev systematises in his work a number of interesting and well-founded *de lege ferenda* proposals in these areas, which are both topical and well-founded.

The dissertation convincingly demonstrates a profound knowledge of the theoretical and practical-legal aspects of the issues related to Bulgarian citizenship. It and the submitted scholarly publications analyse extensive theoretical concepts and positions which, together with the important *de lege ferenda* proposals, clearly contribute to the development of the institution within the Bulgarian constitutional model.

The dissertation abstract of Todor Rogoshev precisely contains all the necessary elements, while the statement of scholarly contributions prepared by the doctoral student accurately reflects what has been achieved in the dissertation.

The dissertation also exhibits certain imperfections which do not diminish its scholarly value. A more thorough analysis and substantiation are necessary in formulating the thesis concerning the inadmissibility of direct appeals against presidential decrees related to the granting and loss of citizenship. The author of the dissertation develops this thesis solely in the context of the possible infringement of the constitutional regime of presidential irresponsibility. This would contribute to the completeness of the exposition and enrich the analysis. I consider that the dissertation deserves to be made publicly available as an independent scholarly publication. Given its scholarly value as a comprehensive study of the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship, such a publication would be useful not only to researchers in the field of

constitutional law, but also to persons actively engaged in political and public affairs.

Dear Members of the Academic Jury,

In view of the merits of the dissertation, I consider that it possesses indisputable qualities, demonstrates in-depth analysis leading to theoretical conclusions, and contains important contributions and *de lege ferenda* proposals; therefore, I confidently propose that the Academic Jury award Todor Ivanov Rogoshev the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” in the scientific field of Social, Economic and Legal Sciences (3), professional field of Law (3.6), specialty of Constitutional Law.

12.09.2026

Prepared by the reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Plamen Kirov