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**‘Bulgarian Passports’ – A Possibility for  
Greater Mobility of Macedonians and/or  
Manipulating Strategies of Identity**

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Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, we can say, on a basis of visa regime inspection with other countries in the world, have had extremely limited travel possibilities outside Macedonia's borders. According to the Ministry for foreign affairs document<sup>1</sup> for visa regulations with other states, from the listed 198 states, the Macedonian citizens can travel without visas in only 21 countries, which is almost 10% from the total state number with which our state has been established mutual relations. In the countries in the region, the Macedonian citizens can travel without visas in 7 countries<sup>2</sup>, from which 5 are ex-Yugoslav and Albania and Turkey. The rest 14<sup>th</sup> countries<sup>3</sup> are distant and not well known for the Macedonian citizens and they can hardly travel there. Some of them have specific political and economic systems which make them not very interested for Macedonian citizens. In previous mentioned list, of course, there has not been listed any central European, neither other countries that traditionally had been destination of, almost, one century of Macedonian guest workers tradition (pechalba). From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays, there is a tradition of seasonal guest working (pechalba), mostly of male hardworking population, which has been fluctuating in relation with destinations and numbers depending of social, political, and at least of economic circumstances in Macedonia, as well as in the countries of destination. Also, it has been noticed in the records, population emigration from Macedonia into the other countries in Europe and other parts of the world. So, according to the Agency for Emigration of RM records, around 500.000 people<sup>4</sup> have been emigrated from Macedonia and, now, they live in different countries in the world, but predominantly in Australia, Italy, Swiss, Germany, USA and other countries. That population have still maintained relations and communication with their close relatives in the country of birth, and still they have need to travel. However, in practice, that situation means a great limitation of their travel opportunities abroad, than also it is a huge burdening of their family budgets

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<sup>1</sup> *Visa regime of Republic of Macedonia with other states, special administrative regions and subjects and territorial authorities not recognized as states*, Ministry of foreign affairs of RM, Skopje, May 2009. Available on <http://www.mfa.gov.mk/default1.aspx?ItemID=262> . Last time opened on 24.06.2009.

<sup>2</sup> Those are following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia and Monte Negro.

<sup>3</sup> Those are following countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Israel, Japan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Singapore, Tunisia, Hong Kong, Honduras and Sri Lanka.

<sup>4</sup> Agency for emigration of the Republic of Macedonia, *Statistical data about the number and structure of emigrants from Macedonia in certain countries in abroad (sheet preview)*, <http://makemigration.readyhosting.com/aktivnosti/statistika/statistika1.asp>

arising from the administrative expenditures for collecting all necessity documents for visa application, and also expenses for visa application.

In that period, Republic of Macedonia, besides great social-political and economic turmoil and, even the war conflict in 2001, has been making effort for stabilization and consolidation of its system, procuring the citizens with passports and safety in relation with their rights, freedom and security, especially in the field of migration, than visa policy, border administration and governing, and documents' security in accordance with the European regulative. So, from 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008, the Agreement for visa liberation between Macedonia and EU has been in force. With the Agreement has been provisioned simplification of the visa issuing process for Macedonian citizens for those which the planed stay abroad has not been exceeded more than 90 days in the period of 180 days. The Agreement has been administered by all EU member state, excluding Denmark, United Kingdom and Ireland<sup>5</sup>.

### **Citizenship and passport**

In the Republic of Macedonia from the declaration of independence in 1991, the social and political situation has been relatively dynamic and turbulent and the economic situation very concernment. There are enormous unemployed people who can hardly work as guest workers in the European and overseas countries, exactly because of the visa issues.

In fact, the passport issues and the travelling opportunities for Macedonian citizens have not just been problem erased as a result of specific relations between Macedonia and other countries, but it was also a problem that emanated as a result of many social and political problems and processes happening in the country in the period after its independence proclamation. Processes related with the SFRYugoslavian citizenship (drzhavjanstvo) from 1945 till the end of the 1970 had been really very dynamic, but elaboration of those specific processes would be defocusing from our topic, that is why, in this opportunity, we are just emphasizing the fact that in Yugoslavian socialistic federation, besides the unique federal citizenship, there was existing, at the same time, republic citizenship, where nobody could not be a citizen of any of the Yugoslav republics in the federation, if at the same time, he/she was not a citizen of SFRYugoslavian federation. On that way, the

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<sup>5</sup> Agreement for visa liberation between Macedonia and EU.  
<http://www.mfa.gov.mk/default1.aspx?ItemID=384>

principle of unity between federal and republic citizenship was established<sup>6</sup>. That idea gave a possibility to “the workers, the nationals and nationalities to realize their sovereign rights in the frames of the socialistic republics and autonomous provinces, as well as on the level of the Socialist Federative Socialistic Yugoslavia, where such idea was proclaimed by the Constitution as a common interest”<sup>7</sup>. So, every republic law, allowing particular citizenship for the citizens in their own republics, assigned at same time, that citizens of certain republics are citizens of the Federation, so the citizens of whoever other republic in the frames of Yugoslavia have equal rights in every other republic same as in their own<sup>8</sup>.

As it is well known, after Yugoslavia break, the Yugoslavian citizenship had been ceased, and every of new established countries had been faced with establishing the citizenships of the new states, and started issuing new documents for citizenship to the citizens who had been living there, as a basic requirement in realisation of their citizens’ rights. So, the citizens in the new established states had been put in a situation to prove and to verify, again, their citizenship, and with that to express their loyalty toward the newborn states. Most of the citizens, almost by automatism got the citizenship documents, and acquired legal basis of their civil rights, than possibility to gain documents for their personal status and, normally their travel documents. However, certain number of citizens, who, due to the different reasons were connected with some of other ex-Yugoslav republics, must to take a legal action in front of the state administration requesting to gain citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia (Makedonsko drzhavjanstvo). So, for example, in the transitory articles in the Law for citizenship of RM from 2004 (“Sluzhben vesnik na RM” No. 54/04) in the article 29 in the paragraph 3 it has been said: Citizens of the other ex-SFRYugoslav republics as well as the citizens of ex-SFRYugoslavia who already live on a territory of the Republic of Macedonia, can gain Macedonian citizenship if, in the period of one year after this Law is in force, to apply with a request, if they have access to the permanent financial sources, if they are adults and if they stayed in on

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<sup>6</sup> Gjidara Marc, *Državljanstvo i nacionalnost u Federativnoj Jugoslaviji, (Citizenship and Nationality in Federal Yugoslavia)* Hrvatska Revia, Br. 1, God. 1, 2001, <http://www.matica.hr/HRRevija/revija01.nsf/AllWebDocs/Sadrzaj>

<sup>7</sup> I. Borković, *Upravno pravo, (Administrative Law)*, Beograd, Informator, 1981, str. 128, cited according to Gjidara Marc, *Državljanstvo i nacionalnost u Federativnoj Jugoslaviji*, Hrvatska Revia, Br. 1, God. 1, 2001, <http://www.matica.hr/HRRevija/revija01.nsf/AllWebDocs/Sadrzaj>

<sup>8</sup> Gjidara Marc, *Državljanstvo i nacionalnost u Federativnoj Jugoslaviji, (Citizenship and Nationality in Federal Yugoslavia)* Hrvatska Revia, Br. 1, God. 1, 2001, <http://www.matica.hr/HRRevija/revija01.nsf/AllWebDocs/Sadrzaj>

the territory of RM at least 15 years” (Law for citizenship of RM from 2004 – “Sluzhben vesnik na RM” No. 54/04).

Republic of Macedonia, from its independence proclamation in 1991 till the promulgation the Law for citizenship in RM in 1992 (“Sluzhben vesnik na RM” No. 67/92) was ruled according to the republic Law for citizenship of Socialistic Republic of Macedonia from 1977 (“Sluzben vesnik na SRM” No. 19/77) and according to the federal SFRYugoslav Law (Sluzben vesnik na SFRJ” No. 58/76). Interestingly, in the transitory articles of the Law of citizenship from 2004, it has been determined that, at the moment of acting in force of the new Law, the old one from the socialistic time has been ceased, as well as the federal Law of SFRY, and “it has not be used anymore on the territory of the RM”.

### **Theorizing the Passports**

Rethinking the passport as a one of the most important documents which, on a legal basis of previously verified citizenship, give to the citizen possibility to acquire the right of mobility abroad their countries, one has been asking her/himself of that, how it become one peace of paper to get possibility of authentically identifying the persons, ensuring on that way borders of the nation-state. The passport is a technology that helps in a creation of the categories of identity as nationality and citizenship are (Robertson, 2004: 456).

So passport performs a function of being a document which has been creating a truth about the national identity of the individuals and of the state at the same time. It could be said that with the passport has been much more supported the creation of the citizenship than it has been simply verified. In that sense, the passport has been produced alluding on objectivity, but, after all, the history of passport as an identification document of individuals, illustrates specific contexts in which is possible to be perceived different practices of verification (Robertson, 2004: 454-455). Passport meanings’ investigations show that the modern state and international state systems have alienated it from the individuals and private entities. Of course, it does not mean that the states effectively control all individual movements, but they monopolize the *power* to limit the movement, which, of course, could be different depending on time and type of the state.

### **Western Balkan despite the EU surrounding in the region**

In the years at the end of the 80s, in the Balkans, already defamed in the media and literature, had happened really drastic changes: there was a war, several hundred thousands people perished or disappeared, more than a million people from that region or in the region were refugees, than the new states were created and almost all of them changed their own political and governmental systems and, of course, new classifications and divisions appeared. From what left of former Balkan, now, it has been classified as a Western Balkan with Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro. Also, it has been invented so called Adriatic group of countries, where besides above mentioned states, Croatia was added. Slovenia, as it was previously, very quickly discerned from that group of “Balkan countries” and successfully entered into EU. Then, Slovenia became the EU main “gate” for the Balkans, especially for the Western Balkan, even though Greece was an EU member longer than Slovenia and spatially it is closer to the Balkans. However, the most drastic changes in the countries’ equality happened after Bulgaria and Romania aligned EU in 2007. In 1995 Bulgaria had applied for visa alleviation and liberalization (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 91). In her paper about Bulgarian experiences on visa policy during the alignment period to EU, A. Tchorbadjiyska discloses the facts that “accepted changes are not result of political debates, but result of Brussels claims”, which in fact is the same situation with Macedonia nowadays. That impression is not referred only to Bulgaria, but, according to the citizens opinions could be spread to the rest of the countries pretending to align the EU in the region. As a matter of fact, Macedonian citizens, at the very beginning approach with a great distrust and skepticism to the EU indications on Bulgaria and Romania’s improvement in to the EU aligning processes to EU. A lot of people, remembering the 90s years of XX century as an extremely economic crisis in Bulgaria, and of course additionally their stereotypes about communistic Bulgaria, could not believe that Bulgaria in 2000 started negotiations for alignment to EU. Thus, Western Balkan, in the years after 2000 has been in a situation of harshly confrontation with the visa walls and symbolic, but strong and unbridgeable borders of Europe, interference in front of its citizens. Despite so much discussed ideas of removing the borders and “freely moving of ideas, goods and people, the new situation has been created with much stressed borders which enabled illegal business, smuggling of goods for everyday needs (fuel, oil, food, textile), and even smuggling weapons, drugs and, of course people. After

some of the countries in the region improved their positions in the negotiation process with EU, it has been established positions of inequality among the states and citizens, who, till that time, shared almost same political and economic situation.

Happenings with visa policies in the region contribute, the situation of unequal statuses of some of the Balkan states to become much more expressed, so the citizens from the region started to see those processes like something which, instead of integration, produce segregation, even and specific political hierarchy which, having in mind historical distrusts among the Balkan countries, now, has been using in a favor of some of them over against to the others.

From all Macedonian neighbors, some have been defamed and others in a favor, Bulgaria has been treated as neighbor, who improve towards European integrations very quick and started the changes into the visa regime and laws according to the Shengen agreement which also caused important repercussions towards neighboring countries in the region: Moldavia, Ukraine, and Macedonia.

Visa policy development in Bulgaria is a result of two, mutually interrelated factors: the alignment process in EU which meant acceptance of the Shengen agreement as well as the political and legal programs, aiming Bulgaria to be removed from the EU visa black list (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 88). As it is well known, the alignment process to the Shengen zone has been realized in several phases, so the first one started from Bulgaria's assessment to the zone, and that phase did not have any special implications towards neighboring countries in respect of establishing new Bulgaria's regime toward them. Second period started after Bulgaria joined the EU and ends at the day of entering into the Shengen group; during that period, the border control between old and new member states have been still maintained. New member states can not issue shengen visas until they do not become members entirely, although those countries, formally, became "external borders of the Shengen zone". Even so, in this period states have the possibility to issue their national visas. So, on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, Bulgaria has to have accept entirely so called common "visa black list", excepting Macedonia and that time Serbia and Montenegro (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 90).

In Bulgaria, it was expected that this visa regime alignment process would has special effects, especially towards states which "have specific interrelations with Bulgaria". In addition, it was predicted, that there were to happen to main effects: first, imposing visa for those states' citizens would create administrative and

economic burden which affect decreasing of the number of the visitors. Second, visa imposing would influence “Bulgarian minorities” out of Bulgaria, as a result of difficulties to enter it (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 93). “As it became progressively more difficult to access Bulgaria, many people who met the criteria would apply for citizenship; this not only guaranteed them unlimited access to Bulgaria but also, once Bulgaria became member, to the entire EU” (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 92-93).

### **Ethnography on “Bulgarian passports” for Macedonians**

A lot of researchers of Macedonia during the period of its transition, especially Macedonia after proclamation of its independence in 1991 have noticed that one of Macedonian citizens’ greatest disappointment and frustration was the new established limitation in their movement, especially in regard to their possibilities to travel abroad. Huge number of Macedonian citizens, as well as many others from the new created states rooted from ex-socialistic Yugoslavia, have been facing with numerous administrative, legal, practical and other obstacles in the process of gaining new personal documents, firstly, passport. From other side, Macedonia after proclamation of its independence, has been confronting with the fact that the state has not have the same status and reputation as socialistic Yugoslavia had it previously, especially in regard to the specific visa regime introduced to the Macedonian citizens. Suddenly, Macedonian people who, till the end of the 80s could travel without any obstacles, freely and proudly on their own socialistic Yugoslavian “red passports” in the most of the countries in Europe and the world, now have been find themselves closed into their own states, facing with their own problems and the problems of identities contestation. Unawares, searching and constructing new national states and identities, all Yugoslav collective ideas about “us” as West over against the East and the East over against the West, have been destroyed, as well as the idea of “nonalignment”, those who had the reputation of socialistic, Tito’s state which used to be tampon zone between the capitalistic West and rigid socialistic East. Many people could not even to imagine that Bulgaria, that for more than 40 years was for Yugoslavia stereotype for rigid and closed Soviet socialism where the citizens needed to ask for special permission even they needed to travel from one to the another place inside the state, now, became a EU member state and should be an example for the others.

So, as it was expected, with the process of Bulgaria's EU integration the interests of Macedonian citizens for getting Bulgarian citizenship and personal documents, as well as Bulgarian passports increased. In Macedonia, on this very sensitive topic has been discussing, mainly, in the media, where some attempts for analyzing all aspects, negative and positive sides of the phenomenon are made, trying to understand practical needs and practices of the citizens. The issue has been discussing by the politicians, even in the Macedonian parliament, essentially, attempting to give to those issues daily and political character. In the local Macedonian policy saltiness, which often has been discussing in the regional political centers is a Bulgarian citizenship and passport of ex- Macedonian Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski. Still, it is very difficult to get to the official facts or Governmental official and public reactions on the matter of the fact on Bulgarian passports. Or, of there are any, they mainly, keep salient the most sensitive questions and answers, causing that way even more questions and confusion among the citizens. Almost, there are not official data on the number of Macedonian citizens who applied or those who acquired Bulgarian citizenship and passport. The numbers are, mainly, speculations and according those, there are more than 60.000 passports issued to Macedonian citizens<sup>9</sup>, but to the other sources there are more than 200.000 Macedonians who declared as Bulgarians by nationality and roots, and more than 100.000 are still waiting the response from Bulgarian side for acquiring personal documents<sup>10</sup>.

In her study, A. Tchorbadijska quotes statistical data on the applicant's number and state of origin according to the report for the migration situation in Bulgaria.

#### Top 5 countries of origin of the applicants

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Macedonia	169	1360	1685	2281	2425	2930
Moldova	157	583	1172	2210	2455	2610
Russia	300	447	346	281	160	217
Ukraine	65	243	222	209	245	249

<sup>9</sup> Bulgaria stopped issuing passports for Macedonians

<sup>10</sup> Bulgaria stopped issuing passports for Macedonians

Serbia and Montenegro	61	219	285	161	128	235
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Source: Annex 5 of the Report for the migration situation in Republic of Bulgaria in 2006<sup>11</sup>

According to the Bulgarian Law on citizenship<sup>12</sup>, it should be completed 6 requirements by the applicants:

- Minimum age- 18 years;
- Permanent resident status for at least 5 years;
- Clear criminal record;
- Having income or activity in Bulgaria;
- Fluency in Bulgarian language;
- Being released or to be released from its present citizenship.

However, according to the article 15 of that Law, the applicants with Bulgarian origin have been excepted from all requirements, unless two: minimum age and clear criminal record (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 100). Also, for that applicant's category, the procedure duration has been shortened from one year into three months (Tchorbadjiyska 2007: 100).

Examining medias articles and other announcements, one gets an impression that in the period from 2005 till 2007, when Bulgaria and officially became a EU member state there was a culmination of the Macedonian citizens interest for Bulgarian passports applications. It could be noticed, from journalists' reports as well as from field researches that the applicants claim several basic reasons for Bulgarian passports applications. At first, it has been stressed the Macedonian citizens' need for traveling abroad, particularly in western European countries. As they pointed out, people in the past used to travel lot, and now, it has been disabled their own right to travel, so their fillings of freedom and freely movement have been broken off. Nonetheless, traveling and working abroad possibility and, avoiding queues, long-lasting and very expensive and humiliating visa issuing procedures at the Embassies has been stating by the citizens as the most important reason for applications for

<sup>11</sup> Report for the migration situation in Republic of Bulgaria in 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Law on the Bulgarian Citizenship of 18 November 1998, (*Държавен вестник*, State Gazette) No 136/1998, last amendment SG. 52/29 June 2007).

Bulgarian passports. The author of this article, in the last six months, besides having a multiply Shengen visa for period of three years, have had to apply 3 times more, passing to the whole administrative procedure for issuing visa, to pay necessarily visa prices, and to lost enough time and nerves, just to enable himself to travel for an professional necessities, in Bulgaria, in UK and Greece. Unfortunately, in those above mentioned countries the Shengen visa is not valid. So, it has been asserted that applications for Bulgarian passport have mainly economic motives<sup>13</sup>. “Employment with Bulgarian passport in Czech Republic, Germany, Poland” is one of the many advertisements in the Macedonian media in the period from 2004-2007 motivating Macedonian citizens to get Bulgarian documents<sup>14</sup>.

The most important role in that visa issuing machinery has Bulgarian Agency for Bulgarians from abroad, where, in fact, the applications for Bulgarian citizenship have been submitted by Macedonian citizens who must to claim on their Bulgarian national feelings and Bulgarian roots of origin. “Everybody who will prove Bulgarian origin can get Bulgarian documents. If we have any doubts, we are asking for additional documents” – stated Sonja Burnaska, spokesman of the Agency, published in Macedonian media<sup>15</sup>. Aiming to inspect, allegedly simple rules for Bulgarian passport applications for Macedonian citizens, several Macedonian journalist applied for passports. “Exploration shows that in the request written in Bulgarian language, certified by notary, must be stated ‘Respectable Minister, please, do admit me as a Bulgarian citizen on account of my Bulgarian origin. I’m Bulgarian, by Bulgarian origin by my mother side, as well as by my grand mother side. My grandparents were Bulgarian citizens. My father is Bulgarian from Macedonia, as well as my mother” – it has been written in the request. TThe process of issuing personal documents costs around 200 EUR and the documents have been usually ready for three months. The

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<sup>13</sup> Зошто Македонците бараат бугарски пасоши (Why do Macedonians ask for Bulgarian passports?) , BBC Macedonian com., 01.06.2006

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2006/05/060501\\_mac\\_bul\\_passports.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2006/05/060501_mac_bul_passports.shtml)

<sup>14</sup> Костовска, Ивана, Бугарија прекина да им издава пасоши на Македонци (Kostovska Ivana, *Bulgaria has stopped issuing passports to Macedonians*), Нова Македонија (daily newspaper Nova Makedonija)

<http://www.novamakedonija.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=611934236888&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21709>

<sup>15</sup> Костовска, Ивана, Бугарија прекина да им издава пасоши на Македонци (Kostovska Ivana, *Bulgaria has stopped issuing passports to Macedonians*), Нова Македонија (daily newspaper Nova Makedonija)

<http://www.novamakedonija.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=611934236888&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21709>

document has been issued illegally because it is declared false address which the applicants have never heard for it<sup>16</sup>. Macedonian citizen who get the Bulgarian passport, also get Bulgarian ID card, but usually with fictive address: ‘I told the name of the street I saw somewhere in the city, and now I have that address in my personal documents. I even do not know where that street is. They are not doing any controls’ – said Macedonian citizen who has Bulgarian citizenship<sup>17</sup>.

In Macedonia, as a result of an increased market for Bulgarian passports, the last years, another new business prospering with so called Agencies for mediation in getting Bulgarian citizenship and passports. If one has make, even a superficial inspection of the media reports, especially in the field of advertisements and announcements, it could be noticed that almost in every city in Macedonia have been advertised agencies for mediation in the process of providing all necessarily documents for applications, which for those jobs are being paid certain amounts of money.

It is also very important to be stressed here, that Bulgarian state administration does not have an equal criteria and rules toward all Macedonian citizens. It is wider well known that for Bulgarian passports can apply only ethnic Macedonians, particularly those with orthodox Christian religion. All others, “Muslims, Roma, and Albanians are not granted with passports. Even the Serbs from Macedonia can not get the Bulgarian passport”<sup>18</sup>.

From the other side, Bulgarian official policy has had quite different approach toward Gorans, inhabitants of the regions of Gora nad Sredachka Zhupa in Kosovo, for whom there are so many silent as well as public strategies for their imposing to the Bulgarian ethnic protection. Actually, the Gorans are one more part for the very important part of Balkan Muslims who are speaking some of the Slavic languages. In the Balkan states official attitudes, but also in the research studies, there is a

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<sup>16</sup> Костовска, Ивана, Бугарија прекина да им издава пасоши на Македонци (Kostovska Ivana, *Bulgaria has stopped issuing passports to Macedonians*), Нова Македонија (daily newspaper Nova Makedonija)  
<http://www.novamakedonija.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=611934236888&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21709>

<sup>17</sup> Зошто Македонците бараат бугарски пасоши (Why do Macedonians ask for Bulgarian passports?) , BBC Macedonian com., 01.06.2006

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2006/05/060501\\_mac\\_bul\\_passports.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2006/05/060501_mac_bul_passports.shtml)

<sup>18</sup> Зошто Македонците бараат бугарски пасоши (Why do Macedonians ask for Bulgarian passports?) , BBC Macedonian com., 01.06.2006

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2006/05/060501\\_mac\\_bul\\_passports.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/macedonian/news/story/2006/05/060501_mac_bul_passports.shtml)

discussion on their ethnic and national belonging. So, some of them are declared by the others, or they are declaring by themselves as well, as Macedonians, others as Serbs, and third ones as Bulgarians. On that way, the strategy of offering them Bulgarian passport has been accounted as “valid” acting towards that population. According to the field data, as well as from the media reports it is known that in 2006 the Bulgarian national community has been established and registered by UMNIK in Kosovo. Among the Muslims in Sredacka Zhupa, the Cultural and Education Association of Islamized Bulgarians has been established, and the members of that Association are eligible to apply for Bulgarian passports, declaring themselves as “Bulgarian – Mohammedans”<sup>19</sup>.

The EU anxiety on that issue has been lasting from the time when Bulgaria aligns with the EU, when Cypriot Greeks reacted on the fact that Bulgaria has granted passports even to the Turks, so they can freely travel and work in European countries”<sup>20</sup>.

That was the reason, some of the EU countries, like UK, frightened by the migrants, utilizing the fact that Bulgaria issues Bulgarian passport to the foreigners very easy, to close their own labor markets for Bulgarian citizens. Some of the British media published articles with titles about the invasion of Macedonians with Bulgarian passports, whereupon on the occasion of that issue the leader of the UK Independence Party Nick Farage gave such statement: “People can now use other countries as a waiting room to spill onto our doorstep. We’ve lost control”. Sir Andrew Green, from the group campaign Migrationwatch UK, stated: “The borders of EU states are leaky enough”<sup>21</sup>.

Here from, journalist Ivana Kostovska in her article “German passports just because of the feeling of belonging!?!”, asking “If it is possible that Macedonian citizens can get the French or German passports if just verify certification to the notary that they feel themselves as French or German?! The answer is clear and shows that in EU are not valid same rules, even besides the EU attempts to be a

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<sup>19</sup> Бугарски пасоши за Гораните (Bulgarian passports for Gorans). Дневник (daily newspaper Dnevnik) 18.март 2006, бр. 2947.

<sup>20</sup> Костовска, Ивана, Бугарија прекина да им издава пасоши на Македонци (Kostovska Ivana, *Bulgaria has stopped issuing passports to Macedonians*), Нова Македонија (daily newspaper Nova Makedonija) <http://www.novamakedonija.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=611934236888&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21709>

<sup>21</sup> Invasion: Macedonians with Bulgarian Passports, [http://international.ibox.bg/comment/id\\_1528913771](http://international.ibox.bg/comment/id_1528913771)

rigorous teacher towards the countries pretending to become members of the European society, as Macedonia it is”<sup>22</sup>.

Meanwhile, in the months from the beginning of the 2009, while the author of the paper has been working on the topic, it seems that situation has been changing as fast as from the time when it appeared on the Macedonian social scene. So, Macedonian media, often and often, report on the fact that the number of applications of Macedonian citizens for Bulgarian passports rapidly decreased, and the interest for them almost disappeared. That fact, firstly, has been interpreted as a result on the media reports that EU Commission for the visa liberalization towards Macedonia will be announced in public in the summer of 2009 and the positive report would be given for Macedonia which means that the country would be put on a Shengen white list and citizens would freely move and travel in European countries. Also, in the media are published many articles in which has been highlighted that there are so many remarks on Bulgaria’s sharing passports “admitting so many foreigners to become Bulgarian citizens, very quickly, enabling them to apply for jobs in the member states. In a hope, that Bulgaria in the next two years would become fully member state to the Shengen zone, it has been oppressed not issuing passports to the foreigners”<sup>23</sup>, so the number of the issued Bulgarian citizenships have been rapidly decreased.

### **Strategies**

Here we would like to explore different interpretations of the strategies undertaken by the citizens as individuals, than by the state’s institutions, in that case by the states as representatives of certain political and social ideologies, and of course, EU undertaken strategies towards its own member states as well as towards the Western Balkan countries which aim to align EU.

First, I would like to stress here the importance of the processes’ dynamics happening in the region. As it is possible to be noticed from the ethnographic materials, the things are happening very dynamic, which sometimes appears even

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<sup>22</sup> Костовска Ивана, Германски пасош за чувство на припадност!?! (German passport for the feeling of belonging?!?)  
<http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=612942053427&id=13&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21710>

<sup>23</sup> Костовска, Ивана, Бугарија прекина да им издава пасоши на Македонци (Kostovska Ivana, *Bulgaria has stopped issuing passports to Macedonians*), Нова Македонија (daily newspaper Nova Makedonija)  
<http://www.novamakedonija.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=611934236888&id=9&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21709>

difficult some of the actions to be follow up. But, more important, the dynamics of those happenings does not have just its own, inner energy, but also, many of the changes have been stimulated from outside, mainly, as a result of the actions by the EU, particularly affected by the EU attitudes toward certain issues in the region. Therefore, it is quite noticeable that the intensity of the happenings and their directions has been related by the EU attitudes towards those issues. In the Macedonian media very often can be noticed articles discussing the EU “doubled standards” towards the countries which pretend to become EU member states. “The EU egoism became obvious, also, in the case of issuing Bulgarian passports for the Macedonian citizens. So, the Union of the nations, which should be an example for democracy, freedom and human rights stayed with ‘crisscrossed hands’ on the warning that besides the strategy of issuing Bulgarian passports to the Macedonian citizens has been done attack to the Macedonian nationality /.../ The EU find itself stroked, only in the moment when it was filled that the Union could be endangered its integrity by the Macedonian workers with Bulgarian passports flood<sup>24</sup>.

Thinking about the strategies, logically, we are starting from the Marshal’s concept of citizenship, which, practically, enables individuals to gain documents for personal identification and passports, and as e concept it has been composed from three main elements or dimensions. The first one is that the citizenship is a legal status; the second element provides political, and third, social rights and engagements to the citizens. Thus, when the citizenship has been observed as a strategy through the prism of individual, the closest to the reality is, if it associated with achievement of the legal status, which, in the case with Macedonian citizens, provides them with travel documents enabling to travel in the foreign countries. Almost no one of the Macedonian citizens, and now, after they get and Bulgarian documents, also Bulgarian citizens, with whom we discussed, do not have any ideas for eventual and practical effectuating their own rights and obligations in front of Bulgarian state as Bulgarian citizens. Indeed, minimum of them, or generally none of those who acquired Bulgarian passport do not live or work in Bulgaria. At least, they leave for Greece or to the other European countries. Those ‘Bulgarian citizens’ do not consider

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<sup>24</sup> Костовска Ивана, Германски пасош за чувство на припадност?! (German passport for the feeling of belonging?!?)  
<http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=612942053427&id=13&prilog=0&setIzdanie=21710>

that they can affect on any way on the Bulgaria's future as citizens who have the right to vote, to be organized into political organizations or parties.

From other side, political implications of citizen's status became visible into the state strategies and strategies of the political parties, which can be, especially, perceived in to their statements and discussions in media, press conferences of the political parties and their representatives. Political strategies, usually have not been manifest, but, often, latent, respecting all time the legal frames of the activities. In the case with Bulgarian state administration strategy, from legal point of view, there is nothing controversial in a relation with the citizenships issued to the Macedonian citizens. From the other side, having in mind historical and daily-political events of disputing of Macedonian national and ethnic identity and language, drives to thoughts in Macedonian public that it is one among the many of the strategies that Bulgarian state have been applied toward Macedonians aiming to stagger their identity. The most sensitive, it seems, has been the position of the EU member states during longer period refusing to thing for that problem, which was, maybe, so far from their ways of understanding of the things, but which could be, still, abused by the Bulgarian state in the official declarations, even though, undertaking measures for "protection" to the Bulgarian citizens living in Macedonia, considering them as a minority. It could be, particularly important for the countries realizing *national citizenship*, as in practice has been in Macedonia and Bulgaria. In the cases of the citizenships where the nation, in which name the state has been established, that citizenship is considered as a privilege to the members of certain ethnic, language, religious or cultural community. (Hammar, 1990).

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