



Pathways to citizenship for third-country nationals in the EU

**EMN Synthesis Report
for the EMN Study 2019**

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The study was part of the 2019 Work Programme for the EMN.

Explanatory note

This Synthesis Report was prepared on the basis of national contributions from **25 EMN NCPs** (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SK, UK and NO) collected via a Common Template developed by the IE NCP and EMN NCPs to ensure comparability, to the extent possible. National contributions were primarily based on desk analysis of existing legislation and policy documents, reports, academic literature, internet resources, and reports and information from national authorities rather than primary research. The listing of Member States and Norway in the Synthesis Report following the presentation of synthesised information indicates the availability of more detailed information in their national contributions and it is strongly recommended that these are consulted as well.

Statistics were sourced from Eurostat, national authorities and other national databases.

It is important to note that the information contained in this report refers to the situation in the abovementioned Member States and Norway up to December 2018, and specifically the contributions from their EMN NCPs.

EMN NCPs from other Member States could not participate in this study for a variety of reasons but have done so for other EMN activities and reports.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- 1. Policies on the acquisition of citizenship have evolved over the past five years, with Member States reporting trends that have had the impact of making access to citizenship either more liberal or more restrictive.** Trends in the numbers of individuals granted citizenship of an EU-28 Member States have shown an overall decline in the period of time covered by the study.
- 2. The criteria for granting citizenship and the procedures in place are broadly similar across the Member States but the specific conditions and requirements that apply vary considerably, depending on whether more liberal or restrictive policies are in place.** Processing times, the costs to applicants and available support were found to all vary significantly.
- 3. For many aspiring citizens, naturalisation can be a lengthy and costly process, with limited available support, and a positive outcome is in general not guaranteed, even where all conditions have been met.**
- 4. The majority of Member States now allow for dual citizenship,** which may acknowledge the demographic reality that many migrants have ties to more than one country. Other Member States – in practice – apply exemptions where the renunciation of a previous citizenship cannot reasonably take place. However, dual citizenship brings both benefits and challenges.
- 5. Citizenship is seen by Member States as either the culmination of the integration process or as facilitating the integration process.** However, in most Member States, third-country nationals are not actively encouraged to apply for citizenship, and support is limited.



SCOPE AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study provides a comparative overview of the frameworks in place across the Member States of the European Union (EU) for access to national citizenship for **new migrants** from third countries, through naturalisation. The increase in the number of new migrants who have arrived in the EU in recent years, either as beneficiaries of international protection, for work, or other purposes, has shed light on the importance of their integration. Thus, the acquisition of citizenship, whether as the final step in the integration process, as a means of facilitating integration and/or as an incentive to become part of a new society, is the focus of this EMN Study. Its scope gives priority to the acquisition

of national citizenship through **ordinary naturalisation** for **new migrants**, i.e. third-country nationals who do not have pre-existing ties with the Member State, and does not include the situation of the second and third generation (i.e. individuals born in and residing in a country that at least one of their parents or grandparents previously entered as a migrant). The study is based on national information and data collected by the authors, from National Contact Points established in each participating Member State and reflects the situation and developments that have occurred in the **last five years**.



METHOD AND ANALYSIS

The information used in this Synthesis Report came primarily from secondary sources provided by 25 EU Member States.¹ National contributions were based on desk analysis of existing legislation and policy documents, reports, academic literature, internet resources, reports and information from national

authorities. In some Member States, primary data collection through interviews with national stakeholder was carried out. Statistics were sourced from Eurostat or provided by national authorities.

¹ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SK, UK. This publication was part of the 2019 EMN Work Programme and therefore includes contributions from the United Kingdom as an EU Member State up to 31 January 2020.



ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP – AN OVERVIEW OF LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Citizenship is a matter of law in all EU Member States, and in almost all Member States, the general principles applicable to the acquisition and/or use of citizenship are laid down in their constitutions, with detailed provisions set out in the relevant national act(s). Member State citizens also enjoy the rights of EU

citizenship, including the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to limitations and conditions laid down by EU law. Thus, whilst the conditions of acquisition and loss of citizenship fall within the remit of national competence, Member States must have due regard to EU law.



EVOLUTION AND RECENT CHANGES IN CITIZENSHIP LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Policies, procedures and requirements that frame the acquisition of citizenship evolve with time and are shaped by factors such as political considerations, policy priorities and migration flows. The study found that 16 Member States have undergone major policy changes in the past five years, which have had the effect of making access to citizenship either more liberal or more restrictive. Member States adapted their policies on the one hand to facilitate integration and adapt to societal changes, such as the drive to improve gender equality (Sweden, Finland) and social

inclusion (Malta), plus to address issues relating to historical conditions (Austria) and family ties (Germany, Greece, Portugal, Luxembourg). On the other hand, more restrictive measures have been introduced to tackle the risk of terrorism or to protect state security for example in Germany, Finland, Portugal and the United Kingdom. More stringent language requirements have also been adopted by some Member States with a view to facilitate the integration of the applicant.



CONFERRAL OF CITIZENSHIP ACROSS THE MEMBER STATES – SCALE AND SCOPE

Some 656 000 third-country nationals were granted the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2018. This represented a decrease of 2.2 % compared to the 2017 figure. In 2018, citizenship was granted mainly to individuals aged between 15 and 49 years old and, in the vast majority of Member States, the conferral of citizenship was significantly lower for individuals aged 50 years and over. In three countries², the main recipients were children aged under nine years. From a gender perspective, there were no major differences between men and women granted citizenship in 2018.

Rights stemming from the acquisition of citizenship included, in all Member States, voting and standing for parliamentary election at the national level (although different rules may be in place at the local level), access to certain professions reserved for citizens, and in some cases, citizens enjoy more preferable conditions regarding social security. Other rights may include (in some Member States) diplomatic and consular assistance abroad and the right to re-enter the Member State. Duties may include compulsory military service; participation in the judicial system; and the obligation to participate or assist in national defence.



ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BY BIRTH AND OTHER PATHWAYS

The acquisition of citizenship by birth is well established on the *ius sanguinis* / *ius soli* dichotomy. Under the *ius sanguinis* approach, a child will obtain the citizenship of one or both parents regardless of their place of birth. Only one Member State (Austria) follows solely the *ius sanguinis* principle in its approach to citizenship at birth. In some Member States, it is applied in specific situations e.g. no distinction is made between biological and adoptive parents.

No EU Member State currently grants automatic and unconditional citizenship to children born on their territories (the *ius soli* approach) to non-nationals. The vast majority of Member States grant citizenship on a conditional *ius soli* approach, whereby applicants and/or their non-national parents must comply with a minimum residence period in the country (ranging from 1 to 10 years). Three Member States provide for an automatic double *ius soli*, the automatic right for a child, born on the territory of the respective country and to at least one parent born in that same country, to acquire citizenship³. Two Member States provide citizenship on an unconditional *ius soli* basis for specified groups of individuals, in both cases, born on the territory at predefined times in the past⁴.

In addition to the acquisition of citizenship at birth defined by the *ius soli* / *ius sanguinis* principles, all Member States offer the possibility for third-country nationals to acquire citizenship of their jurisdiction through ordinary naturalisation, although the rules regulating this process differ across countries (see below).

Other pathways to citizenship include special naturalisation procedures which are available in most Member States, and include grounds such as: exceptional merit or benefit for the country; special provisions for children born in the country to parents neither of whom are nationals; recovery of lost citizenship and national origin or cultural heritage. In line with the 1961 United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, most Member States provide for the granting of citizenship if an individual would otherwise be stateless.

² ES, FI, LV.

³ ES, FR and LU

⁴ LU, MT



CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BY ORDINARY NATURALISATION

For a third-country national to be eligible for citizenship, Member States generally require a minimum period of legal residence, usually in the form of permanent residence⁵, although a temporary residence status often also counts towards the required period. Member States accept various forms of proof of the period of residence, most commonly ex officio checks of registers and residence permits, but in some cases also certificates related to educational and professional activities undertaken in the country of application. Knowledge of the host country's language is a prerequisite for citizenship in almost all Member States, which needs to be evidenced through language

certificates or specific language tests. In thirteen Member States, citizenship applicants also have to pass a citizenship or integration test as part of the application procedure. The fulfilment of requirements regarding good conduct and public order is necessary in all Member States, in addition to the legal or symbolic commitment to certain values in 15 Member States, for example in the form of an oath of allegiance. A final important aspect in 14 Member States is the applicant's economic situation or standard of living, which was used to help authorities assess whether the applicant would be unlikely to have to rely on social assistance.



PROCEDURAL ASPECTS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BY ORDINARY NATURALISATION

A wide variety of actors from all levels of government are involved in the procedure for the acquisition of citizenship through ordinary naturalisation in Member States. These are most commonly municipalities or other local authorities at the application and checking stages, as well as the Ministries of Justice or Interior. The final decision on the application is usually taken at a high level of government, i.e. the president or responsible Minister. The time period for processing applications varies from six to 48 months and the costs related to the application range from no fee to € 1 500 depending on the Member State. In all Member States, the citizenship application has to include an ID/travel document, and in most cases inter alia also a birth certificate and proof of legal residence. Challenges related to the verification of identity were highlighted in nine Member States, which were sometimes addressed by allowing the submission of alternative proof.

In all Member States, the decision for granting citizenship is at least partly based on discretion, i.e. a negative decision can still be issued, even if all legal requirements are fulfilled, except in Belgium and Germany where there is a right to be naturalised

if all legal requirements are fulfilled. However, the majority of Member States apply conditional discretion, and thus a rights-based approach, meaning that if the minimum requirements are met, citizenship will be granted, and refusal will often have to be duly justified. Comparable data on the negative decision rate of citizenship applications falling within the scope of this study is not available. Just four Member States provided data on negative decision rates, most of which were relatively low. The most common ground for a negative decision on a citizenship application was that of insufficient or an unlawful period of residence. The support provided to third-country nationals by national authorities prior to and during the application process was usually limited to information provided via online channels, helpdesks or personal consultations, and third-country nationals were usually not actively encouraged to consider applying for citizenship. Information concerning integration measures to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship (language classes, civics/citizenship education, participation in local activities, etc.) were usually also not available, although three Member States allowed for the reimbursement of costs related to language training.



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE PROCESSING OF CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS⁶

The Covid-19 pandemic and the containment measures taken across the EU is having a varied impact on the processing of citizenship applications. While 14 Member States did not take any particular measures or note a particular impact on the authorities' ability to process applications, nine Member States reported either a full suspension of services or at least delays. In some

cases, specific courses or exams related to language skills and civic knowledge requirements in the framework of citizenship applications had to be cancelled or postponed. Most Member States cancelled or postponed oral appeal hearings due to the closure of courts. In some cases, appeal proceedings nevertheless continued in the form of written procedures.

⁵ of five years in most Member States, more details are provided in Section 3.1 (Table 3).

⁶ The information provided refers to the situation as of 5 May 2020.



DUAL CITIZENSHIP

In seventeen Member States participating in the study, dual citizenship is possible, meaning there is no requirement to renounce a previous citizenship when acquiring or holding a citizenship of one of these Member States. This approach acknowledges that many migrants remain connected to their home countries and relating features such as identity, traditions and cultural heritage, as well as to their host country. Dual citizenship brings benefits for those individuals acquiring a further citizenship, who are not obliged to renounce their previous nationality, such as retaining rights of entry and residence in both states of nationality, and may avoid certain restrictions on

property ownership, commercial activities etc. Some Member States not permitting dual citizenship did provide exceptions for certain persons, for example, to allow the retention of close connections with diaspora communities abroad.

Related challenges identified by some Member States allowing dual citizenship included public concerns about national security; and in cases where consular assistance was needed in the dual country of citizenship, where opportunities for Member States to act were dependent on what was also possible in that country.



CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION

Studies have presented evidence that naturalised immigrants in general tend to have better integration outcomes than non-nationals (e.g. Bloemraad, 2017). However, citizenship acquisition and integration are seen differently from one Member State to another, depending on their approach to citizenship. Whilst in the majority of Member States, citizenship is viewed as linked to national integration policy, in others it is not, either because no overall integration policy exists at the national level, or because the policies in place address third-country nationals before they have acquired citizenship. In some Member States, citizenship was seen as the 'culmination' of the integration process – by acquiring citizenship, new citizens were considered 'integrated' – while in other Member States, citizenship is viewed itself as a key measure to facilitate the integration of migrants into the host society. In some Member States, the link between citizenship and integration is unclear or is the subject of ongoing debate.

Specific support for new citizens were provided in a few Member States. These ranged from: booklets providing information on the rights and obligations of citizens, and free; tickets for museums or other cultural events; to language courses at local level; initiatives that support labour market integration; and support to enhance political participation. Many of these measures were not solely targeting new citizens but often citizens with a migration background in general.

Every citizen in an EU Member State is also a citizen of the European Union; however, little evidence emerged that would suggest that new EU citizens are actively supported to better exercise their rights as EU citizens, such as intra-EU mobility. Rather, naturalisation is generally associated with long-term settlement in the respective Member State and not a planned move to another EU Member State.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. STUDY AIMS

The study provides a comparative overview of the **existing schemes framing access to national citizenship through naturalisation for third-country nationals across the Member States of the European Union (EU)**. Falling under the competence of national governments, rules applicable in that respect diverge from one Member State to another. Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) defines citizenship of the Union as a complement to national citizenship. This report focuses on the acquisition by third-country nationals of national citizenship (i.e. of a given Member State), and subsequently of EU citizenship. It therefore aims to summarise the different approaches taken by Member States for granting national citizenship, starting with a broad description of the legal framework applicable, before entering a more detailed mapping of the conditions and requirements set forth by national authorities.

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EMN, through its ad-hoc query tool, collected information about the impact on the processing of citizenship applications and related appeal proceedings in Member States.⁷ The replies are summarised in Section 4, reflecting the situation in Member States as of 5 May 2020.

1.2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is based on National Reports from 25 Member States⁸ and focuses on the specificities that exist in Member States, but also examines the key trends at EU level. It is noted that at the time of development of this report, the United Kingdom was an EU Member State, and was therefore included as such in the analysis. The scope of this study focuses on the acquisition of national citizenship for **new migrants**, i.e. third-country nationals who do not have pre-existing ties with the Member State, and thus excludes the situation of the second and third generation. It examines the acquisition of national citizenship through **ordinary naturalisation**⁹ and reflects the situation and developments that have occurred in the **past five years**.

1.3. RATIONALE AND EU POLICY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Awarding national citizenship is a prerogative of the Member States, which they must exercise having due regard to EU law¹⁰. Indeed, whilst Member States are responsible for laying down the conditions for the acquisition of citizenship¹¹, Member State citizens also enjoy the rights of EU citizenship. This includes, among others, the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to limitations and conditions laid down by EU law, as stipulated by Article 21(1) TFEU. In this sense, national citizenship has an important EU dimension.

Migration flows observed in the past few years have led EU national governments to adapt their laws and policies, including with regard to naturalisation. The integration of third-country nationals has become an important policy topic in many Member States, not least as a result of the large number of new migrants who arrived in the EU in 2014-2016, either as refugees who received international protection, or for work purposes and/or family reasons. The acquisition of citizenship can be seen as both the final step of an individual's integration process or as a means of facilitating integration and an incentive for individuals to become part of a new society. Furthermore, naturalised immigrants in general tend to have better integration outcomes than non-nationals.

According to Eurostat, in 2018, roughly 656 000 third-country nationals became citizens of one of the EU-28 Member States, with most new citizenships granted by the United Kingdom (106 263), Italy (103 463) and France (95 978). This represented a reduction over the previous year when roughly 671 000 third-country nationals became citizens of one of the EU-28 Member States, most of them in Italy (135 804), France (101 945) and the United Kingdom (90 688).

Citizenship may be acquired through different modes, and the focus of this study is to examine the acquisition of **citizenship through naturalisation**. This mode of acquisition is therefore distinct from the acquisition of citizenship through birth-right which may result either from descent from a citizen parent (*ius sanguinis*) or through birth taking place on a given territory (*ius soli*). Acquisition modes other than naturalisation are further explained in Section 2.5 hereafter, with a view to providing an

⁷ EMN ad-hoc query 2020.24

⁸ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SK, UK. This publication was part of the 2019 EMN Work Programme and therefore includes contributions from the United Kingdom as an EU Member State up to 31 January 2020.

⁹ Acquisition of citizenship through automatic and/or special naturalisation is excluded (i.e. marriage, investor schemes, political/discretionary reasons are out of scope).

¹⁰ Member States shall also keep in mind, when legislating, international instruments such as the Geneva Conventions from 1951 (the Refugee Convention in particular), the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness from 1961 as well as the European Convention on Nationality from 1997. Specifically, Article 34 of the Refugee Convention invites Contracting States to facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees [...] by making effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings.

¹¹ See Case Tjebbes and others C-221/17, Judgment of the Court of 12 March 2019, and Case Rottmann C-135/08, Judgment of the Court of 2 March 2010.

overview of the different scenarios possible, before describing in detail the naturalisation process.

Naturalisation is understood as '*any type of acquisition - after birth - of a nationality not previously held by the target person, that requires an application by this person or their legal agent as well as an act of granting nationality by a public authority*¹²'.

Naturalisation can also be acquired differently. There are three main types of naturalisation, as described below:

- Ordinary naturalisation is a residence-based naturalisation, which does not foresee any waivers of conditions normally envisaged for applicants;
- Discretionary naturalisation is granted on grounds of national interest – fully discretionary naturalisation is where authorities waive all or almost all of the naturalisation conditions;
- Discretionary facilitated naturalisation on the grounds of national interest is discretionary naturalisation, where authorities waive some but not all naturalisation conditions.

Furthermore, additional types of acquisition of citizenship are found in the EU, including the facilitation of conditions for certain ethnic groups, on the grounds of socialisation or family links.¹³

This variety of procedures hints at the complexity of the legal provisions surrounding the acquisition of citizenship.



1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section 2 of this study provides an overview of the legal and policy contexts framing the acquisition of citizenship in Member States, as well as a summary of the recent evolutions and changes. **Section 3** and **Section 4** detail further the ordinary naturalisation process, starting with a description of the conditions and requirements set out by Member States (Section 3), and following-up with an explanation of the different procedural aspects (Section 4). **Section 5** addresses the question of whether dual citizenship is permitted and, if so, what conditions apply, if any. In **Section 6**, attention is given to the extent to which citizenship law and policies link to integration policies and whether the acquisition of citizenship is perceived to be the end of the integration process, or conversely, if it is perceived as a prerequisite to facilitate integration.

¹² EMN Glossary of terms (6.0), European Commission, DG HOME website, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_en

¹³ European Commission (2019). Part A Study Investor Citizenship and Residence Schemes, Notes accompanying Deliverable A. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/part-study-investor-citizenship-and-residence-schemes_en

2. LEGAL AND POLICY OVERVIEW ON THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP



2.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Citizenship is a matter of law in all EU Member States. In all but three Member States covered by this study,¹⁴ constitutions provide general principles applicable to the acquisition and/or use of citizenship and further refer to the relevant national act(s) laying down detailed provisions. Indeed, in most Member States, a dedicated instrument sets out the rules and requirements framing access to citizenship. Equally referred to as law, act or code, this legal instrument contains all the necessary information as to the conditions and procedures applicable in a given Member State.¹⁵



2.2. EVOLUTION AND RECENT CHANGES

Mainly driven by political considerations, procedures and requirements framing the acquisition of citizenship evolve with time, influenced by many factors such as governments' priorities.

In the past five years, 14 Member States have undergone major changes¹⁶ which have led to either more liberal or more restrictive regimes.

The findings that emerged from the research carried at national level for this study show that the rationale behind **more liberal approaches** is threefold; aiming at a **better integration** of third-country nationals, at adapting to **societal changes** but also motivated by **historical considerations** and/or **special ties** with the country¹⁷. In Estonia for instance, language requirements were simplified for applicants aged 65 and above and language classes rendered accessible and free (up to level B1) to all migrants who wished to acquire Estonian citizenship. Luxembourg adjusted its language requirements to prevent this becoming an insurmountable obstacle for applicants. While the requirement to attend a spoken and a listening test was maintained, the successful completion of the spoken test now suffices to pass the language test. Prior to the adjustment, applicants needed to pass both tests. With a view to promote better integration of new citizens, Swedish municipalities are now obliged to arrange citizenship ceremonies once a year, in order to give an official meaning to the new status of successful applicants.

Some Member States have adjusted their legal frameworks in line with societal developments, in particular the need to ensure **gender equality** and **social inclusion**. In Sweden for instance, the legislation was amended in such a way that a child can now acquire Swedish citizenship, regardless of whether they were born abroad or in Sweden, as long as one of their parents is Swedish.

These rules apply regardless of whether the parents are married or not. In Finland, since 2018, a child born to a female same-sex couple as a result of fertility treatment, can obtain Finnish citizenship if one of the parents holds Finnish citizenship, even if born outside of Finland. Finally, the Maltese legislation was amended in 2017 and now provides that, upon authorisation of a Court, a person who is not of full mental capacity may have his or her application submitted by a representative.

The reasons behind more liberal approaches may also be explained by **historical considerations and family ties**. In Austria, a recent amendment of the Citizenship Act, effective from late 2020, has rendered possible, the acquisition of citizenship by descendants of individuals persecuted during the fascist period. Germany recently passed two decrees aimed at facilitating the naturalisation process for descendants of individuals persecuted for the same reasons. Likewise, Swedish nationals who lost their citizenship due to rules in the past forbidding dual citizenship, have obtained the right to regain it. In a few Member States, the ties an individual may have developed vis-à-vis a country were taken into consideration in recent legislative amendments: in Greece, the second generation may acquire Greek citizenship, while in Portugal the grand-children of Portuguese individuals may acquire Portuguese citizenship, even if born abroad. A recent amendment also extended access to nationality and naturalisation to individuals born in Portuguese territories. Combined also with the aim of achieving a better integration, Luxembourgish lawmakers re-introduced the so-called 'option procedure' which allows applicants with strong ties with the country (e. g. those who have resided for a long period or completed school in the country, or who have stateless, refugee or subsidiary protection status - ten specific grounds for application in total) a simplified and accelerated acquisition process. The country also adopted the *ius soli* approach for individuals born on the territory, who are entitled to acquire citizenship upon their majority, provided they fulfil the double-residence criteria (i.e. they are able to demonstrate an uninterrupted five years' period of residence preceding their majority, in addition to having one of their non-Luxembourgish parents lawfully residing in the country in the 12 months period preceding their birth).

Finally, three Member States have revised their criteria for the minimum residence period required, with Luxembourg and Sweden decreasing it by two years,¹⁸ and the United Kingdom considering it fulfilled for citizenship applicants who served the country abroad as members of the armed forces.

Conversely, some Member States opted for **more restrictive measures** in recent years.¹⁹ Justification for these approaches

¹⁴ EL, FR and UK.

¹⁵ AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SK and UK.

¹⁶ AT, BG, CZ, EE, EL, FI, HU, IT, LU, LV, MT, PT, SE and UK.

¹⁷ Historical considerations for AT, DE and SE, family ties for EE, EL, FI, LU, MT.

¹⁸ In Sweden, the revision only applies to children. The new rules reduced the period of domicile required to three years (from five years) and for stateless children from three years to two years.

¹⁹ AT, DE, EE, FI, IT, PT, UK.

were related to demonstrating that **social integration** had taken place and ensuring **public security**.

Austria has extended the minimum residence period by four years for refugees' eligibility for citizenship. While not falling under the temporal scope laid out for this study, reference can nevertheless be made to a 2012 amendment of the Code of Belgian Nationality which also introduced stricter requirements for the acquisition of Belgian nationality through long term residence. Applicants have to demonstrate the following: knowledge of one of the local languages (French, Dutch or German), that they have worked during (part of) the period of five years preceding the application; and so-called 'social integration', evidenced for example by attendance at some form of schooling in Belgium. The rationale behind this legislative change can be found in an objective to ensure that citizenship acquisition for non-nationals is only possible following a process of 'integration' in the country but also to align with rules on access to the territory and ensuring that the acquisition of nationality is applicable only to legal residents. In Italy, since December 2018, the possession of a defined knowledge-level of the Italian language, not lower than level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages is a further requirement for ordinary naturalisation.

In addition, some Member States introduced reforms with the stated aim of better addressing the risk of terrorism or to protect state security²⁰. Finland amended its legislation, to allow citizenship to be revoked for individuals who have committed crimes leading to a five years' minimum prison sentence and when vital interests of the country are at risk (e.g. through terrorism and treason). This applies regardless of whether the individual acquired the citizenship at birth or afterwards but may only be applied to those who hold another citizenship, in order to avoid statelessness. The same approach applies in Belgium, while not affecting those who acquired Belgian citizenship at birth. In Cyprus, a legislative amendment from 2017 allows the Council of Ministers to revoke any citizenship acquired through naturalisation, if within ten years the individual has been sentenced in any country to imprisonment for a particularly heinous crime or for an offence involving moral infidelity, whilst Italy introduced in 2018 the revocation of citizenship acquired through naturalisation for any individual involved in

terrorism-related crimes. In Germany, the 2019 amendment of the Citizenship Act introduced stricter rules whereby Germans who joined a terrorist organisation abroad would lose their citizenship (provided they did not become stateless as a result). Austria also amended its legislation in 2014, allowing citizenship to be revoked for individuals having voluntarily participated in hostilities abroad in the context of an armed conflict on behalf of an organised armed group, again, provided they did not become stateless as a result.

Following the same rationale, the absence of involvement in any terrorism-related practices has become a prerequisite for acquisition of citizenship in Portugal since 2015. In the same year, the United Kingdom introduced the requirement for biometric information as part of the application process, in order to facilitate the detection of risks.

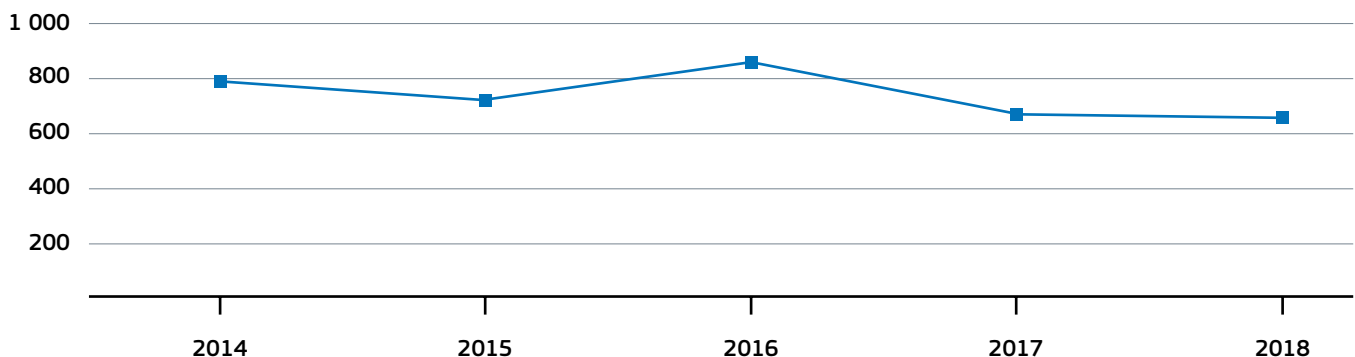
Finally, the Dutch legislation also increased, from four to five years, the minimum period during which an applicant must not have been convicted of any serious offences prior to applying for citizenship. The Swedish Citizenship Act was amended with a view to emphasising the principle whereby citizenship constitutes both a set of rights and obligations. Amid calls for more restrictive measures, a commission of inquiry was appointed to look into possible future policy changes.



2.3. CONFERRAL OF MEMBER STATES' CITIZENSHIPS – STATE OF PLAY IN 2018

As mentioned in Section 1.3, about 656 000 third-country nationals were granted the citizenship of an EU-28 Member State in 2018, a decrease of 2.2 % compared to the number granted in 2017. Italy, Greece and Sweden saw a decrease in the number of citizenship conferrals, while Spain²¹ reported the largest increase in absolute terms followed by Portugal and Germany. The total number of citizenship acquisitions in the EU 28 in 2018, representing both third-country nationals and EU nationals, was 829 274, showing the majority (79%) of acquisitions in the EU are made by non-EU nationals.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS HAVING ACQUIRED THE CITIZENSHIP OF AN EU MEMBER STATE, EU-28, 2014-2018 (1000)



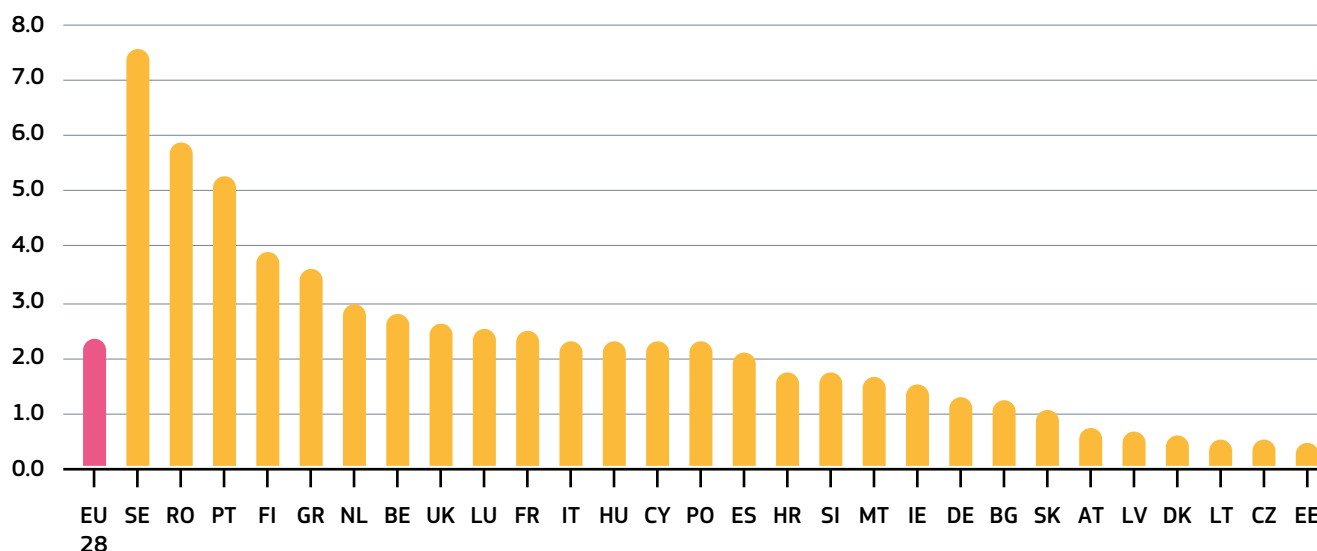
Source: Eurostat, (Source: Eurostat migr_acq, extracted 7 May 2020)

20 AT, BE, CY, DE, FI, IT, NL, PT, UK.

21 The reason is that in 2017 there were problems in the new computer-based system so fewer naturalizations were granted.

Sweden, Romania and Portugal reported the highest naturalisation rate in 2018,²² while the lowest rates were found in Estonia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania.

FIGURE 2: NATURALISATION RATE (ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP PER 100 RESIDENT FOREIGNERS), 2018



Source: Eurostat: migr_acqs, extracted 7 May 2020. Please note that next to third-country nationals, these figures also include EU nationals who acquired the citizenship of another EU Member State.

As in previous years, Moroccan nationals formed the largest group of original citizenship (8.2 %) out of the total (EU and third country) original citizenships reported, followed by Albanian (5.8 %), Turkish (3.6 %) and Brazilian (2.9 %) nationals. However, the former nationalities varied widely across the Member States, reflecting also specific geographies. In Estonia²³, Lithuania and Latvia, citizens of Russia and Belarus were the main non-EU recipients of national citizenships, and in Latvia, US nationals represented the second biggest group of recipients. While citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey formed the main nationalities acquiring Austrian citizenship, the largest number of third-country nationals acquiring citizenship in Ireland in 2018 were Indian and Nigerian nationals, in the Netherlands, Moroccan and Turkish nationals and, in Sweden, Syrian, Somalian and stateless individuals. Italian nationality was granted mainly to Albanian, Moroccan and Brazilian nationals.

In terms of age groups, citizenship in 2018 was granted in most EU Member States mainly to individuals aged between 15 and 49 years old, with a median age of 31. However, in Estonia, Finland and Latvia, the main recipients were children aged less than 9 years. In all Member States but Luxembourg, the conferral of citizenship dropped significantly among individuals aged 50 and over.

In four Member States,²⁴ the allocation of citizenship varied from one age category to another and in terms of country of origin, too. For instance, while Germany granted citizenship to Syrian and Iraqi children mainly in 2018,²⁵ nationals of Turkey, Kosovo and Iran were the main recipients of German citizenship within the 15-39 age category in the same year. Greece granted citizenship mainly to Albanian, Indian and Ukrainian individuals, with Albania representing by far the main recipient category in the 5-29 age category. In Finland, most individuals who acquired citizenship in 2018 were nationals of Russia and Somalia, with most aged either below 9 years old or between 25 and 39 years old.

Luxembourg stands out as a country which granted citizenship to nationals of Montenegro, Brazil and the USA aged 25-49 primarily and to no children below the age of 10. It has to be noted that the overwhelming majority of nationals of Brazil and the USA were not residing in Luxembourg and therefore did not acquire citizenship via ordinary naturalisation, but via the reclamation procedure.

From a gender perspective, there were no major differences between men and women (both EU nationals and third-country nationals) granted citizenship in 2018 (52 % women and 48 % men). Acquisitions of citizenship by men outnumbered those of women in only seven Member States.²⁶

²² The naturalisation rate is the ratio of the number of persons who acquired the citizenship of a country during a year over the stock of foreign residents in the same country at the beginning of the year.

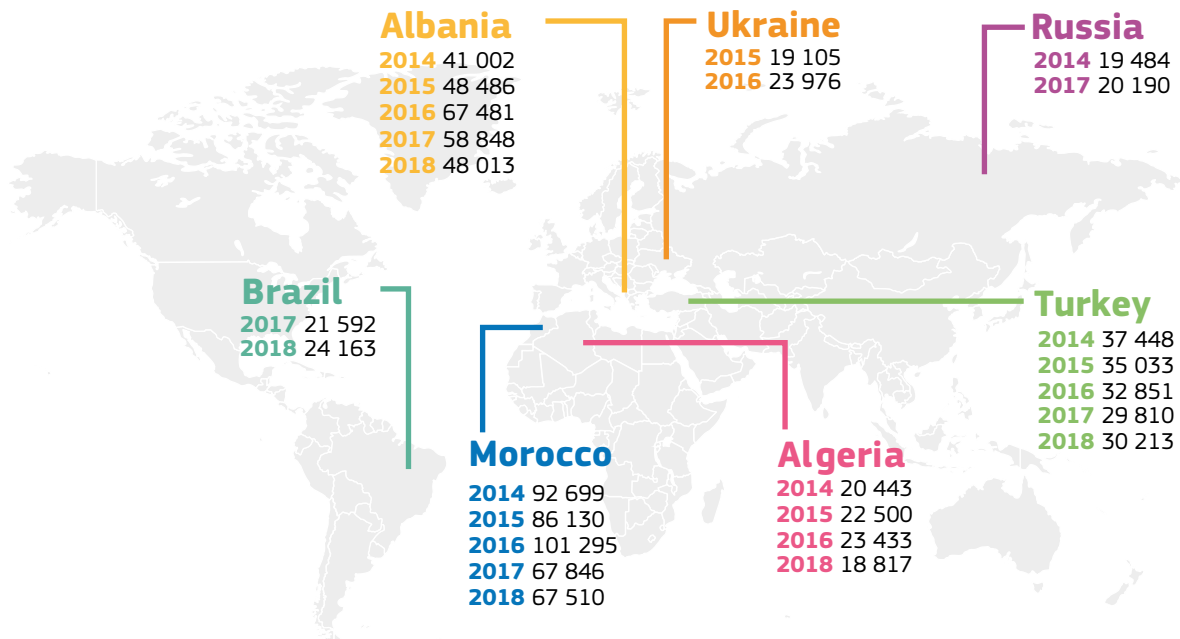
²³ In Estonia, the main non-EU recipients more specifically consist of individuals with 'undetermined citizenship' and Russians. The former is an Estonian term which refers to a specific category of people who stayed in the country after its independence, but who have not acquired the citizenship. They hold specific passports (so-called 'grey passports'). They benefit from almost the same rights as other citizens of the country and are therefore not falling under the stateless category.

²⁴ DE, EL, FI and LU.

²⁵ Aged below 9 years old.

²⁶ BE, BG, EL, HU, RO, SE, SI.

FIGURE 3: TOP-FIVE COUNTRIES OF PREVIOUS THIRD-COUNTRY CITIZENSHIP (2014-2018)



Source : Eurostat migr_acq (based on EU-28 data)



2.4. RIGHTS AND DUTIES STEMMING FROM CITIZENSHIP ACQUISITION

All Member States associate certain rights and duties with the acquisition of citizenship. While this study focuses on the acquisition of citizenship through naturalisation of new migrants, the description below concerns broader categories of individuals, such as those who acquired citizenship through birth-right. There are obvious rights that arise from citizenship; these relate to voting and standing for parliamentary elections at the national level²⁷ although several Member States have different rules at the local level, some making voting compulsory, such as Luxembourg.

In most Member States,²⁸ access to certain professions is reserved for citizens. For example, in Belgium and Bulgaria the positions of judge and prosecutor are reserved for citizens. In Croatia and Estonia, working within/for governmental organisations is open to third-country nationals only in exceptional circumstances.

There are examples where positions have been opened to third-country nationals. For example, in France, foreign nationals can become officials in public services and be employed on a long-term basis by the State, regional authorities or hospitals (except in professions connected to the exercise of sovereign power). However, foreign nationals do have access to these positions, not as permanent officials (*fonctionnaires titulaires*), but as contract agents. In Sweden the rules regarding provision of government jobs only for citizens have been relaxed, although

members of parliament and other high-level officials must still be Swedish citizens.

In some Member States,²⁹ citizens enjoy preferable conditions when compared to other nationals regarding social security and thus have fewer requirements to fulfil in order to be eligible for entitlements. Other rights mainly reserved for citizens of the Member States that took part in the study included diplomatic and consular assistance abroad, as well as the right to re-enter the Member State, whereas third-country nationals may be deprived of these rights under certain conditions. In some Member States, more specific rights exist, for example, in Luxembourg, where in the context of family reunification of third-country national family members, sponsors of Luxembourgish citizenship do not have to prove sufficient financial resources).³⁰

Duties include compulsory military service and participation in the judicial system in some Member States (e.g. in Austria and Finland). There is also an obligation to participate or assist in national defence in Estonia, Finland and France. Additionally, in Finland, citizens must comply with Finnish law abroad, and as citizens can be convicted for a crime committed abroad.



2.5. BASIS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BY BIRTH

Long established on the *Ius sanguinis* / *Ius soli* dichotomy, the granting of birth-right citizenship has evolved with time. All Member States covered by this study, except Austria, have been developing their systems, and now follow a mixed approach.

²⁷ AT, BE, BG, CZ, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LU (voting compulsory for all elections), LV, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT (in some cases), SE, SK, UK (in some cases).

²⁸ AT, BG, CY, CZ, DE (for certain positions only), EE, EL, FR (regarding professions in connection with the exercise of sovereign power), HR, IE, IT, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL (for certain positions only), PL, PT, SE (to some extent), SK, UK.

²⁹ BE, HR, PT.

³⁰ Family reunification is generally considered to promote the integration of third-country nationals. As stated in the Family Reunification Directive (2003/86/EC), "Family reunification is a necessary way of making family life possible. It helps to create sociocultural stability facilitating the integration of third country nationals in the Member State, which also serves to promote economic and social cohesion, a fundamental Community objective stated in the Treaty".

As per the *ius sanguinis* approach, a child will obtain the citizenship of one or both parents regardless of their place of birth. Austria appears as the only Member State generally following the *ius sanguinis* principle solely for citizenship by birth.

Some Member States apply the *ius sanguinis* approach to specific situations: There is no distinction made between biological and adoptive parents in a few Member States³¹, meaning that, in those countries, a child may acquire the citizenship of their adoptive parents. Latvia recognises anyone who was Latvian on 17 June 1940 and any descendent who fled the country under the German/USSR occupation as a Latvian citizen. Lithuania provides for a simplified naturalisation procedure for persons of Lithuanian descent who never were Lithuanian citizens, and a citizenship reinstatement procedure for persons who held Lithuanian citizenship before 15 June 1940 and their descendants, irrespective of their place of residence. Germany recognises ethnic German re-settlers as German citizens. Similarly, anyone who held the Czech citizenship in the past or who was a Czechoslovak citizen before 1968 does not need to fulfil the required minimum period of continuous residence. Finally, Italy allows descendants of residents from Istria and Dalmatia who were Italian citizens to obtain Italian citizenship provided they have a minimum knowledge of Italian language and culture.

ius soli is understood as the acquisition of citizenship by birth in the territory of a country. No EU Member State currently grants automatic and unconditional citizenship to children born in their territories to non-nationals³². All Member States but six³³ grant citizenship on a **conditional *ius soli*** approach according to which applicants need to comply with a minimum residence period in the country. This minimum required parental residence ranges from one to ten years³⁴. In line with the 1961 United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, most Member States grant citizenship if it turns out that without it, an individual would otherwise be stateless. France, Luxembourg and Spain are the only Member States providing for an **automatic double *ius soli***³⁵. Austria in general allow children born to non-nationals to acquire citizenship, only if they renounce the foreign citizenship acquired at birth.

Two Member States provide citizenship on an **unconditional *ius soli***³⁶ basis for specified cohorts:

- In Luxembourg any individual born in Luxembourg before 19 April 1939 is automatically granted the Luxembourgish citizenship³⁷. Since the entry into force of the Nationality Law in 2017, each year on 1 January, the date relevant to this clause is incremented by one year. In other words, in 2020, the person must have been born before 19 April 1942;
- Similarly, the Maltese authorities allow for any individual born between 21 September 1964 and 31 July 1989 to

obtain Maltese citizenship (unless the father benefits from diplomatic immunity).

Annex 1 summarises the approaches followed by Member States and provides details as to the specificities of the scheme applicable.

More information on dual citizenship is provided in Section 5.

2.6. ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BY NATURALISATION

In addition to the *ius soli/ius sanguinis* principles being applied differently from one Member State to another, Member States grant citizenship to third-country nationals through various modes. While differences between the law in Member States are significant, commonalities also emerged from this research. For instance, all Member States offer the possibility for third-country nationals to obtain the citizenship of their jurisdiction through **ordinary naturalisation**, although the rules regulating this process differ across countries. Ordinary naturalisation is discussed in detail in the next Section. In most Member States reporting statistics for this study, ordinary naturalisation is the most common means of acquiring citizenship (see Annex 1).³⁸

Another pathway available to third-country nationals to obtain the citizenship of a Member State is through a **special naturalisation procedure**³⁹. Only a few Member States do not provide for special naturalisation in their legislation.⁴⁰ Among the Member States that do, the requirements vary but the following grounds are more frequently used:

- Exceptional merit or benefit for the country;⁴¹
- Special provisions for children born in the country to parents who are not both nationals;⁴²
- National origin or cultural heritage;⁴³
- Marriage;⁴⁴
- Statelessness;⁴⁵
- Residency period.⁴⁶

Ordinary and special naturalisation are the most commonly used procedures as per the information obtained at national level. However, other possibilities exist in some countries' legislations, such as **economic investment**⁴⁷ and the **recovery of lost citizenship**⁴⁸.

31 BG, CY (only for minors), CZ, DE, EL, IT, FI, FR, IT, LT and LU.

32 European Parliamentary Research Service, Acquisition and loss of citizenship in EU Member States, July 2018.

33 AT, CY, EE, EL, IT, SK.

34 Based on a similar approach but not falling under the conditional *ius soli* concept, Estonia allows for children under 15 years of age who were born in Estonia (or who have, since their birth, been living permanently in Estonia with their parent(s)) to get the citizenship (through naturalisation), provided their parent(s) whom no state recognises under valid laws as its citizen, have lawfully resided in Estonia for at least five years prior to the child's birth.

35 Automatic double *ius soli* refers to the automatic right to acquire citizenship for a child born on the territory of a country and to at least one parent who was also born in the country.

36 Unconditional *ius soli* refers to systems whereby citizenship is automatically granted to individuals born on the soil of a country, regardless of any other conditions.

37 Article 7 of the amended Law of 8 March 2017 on Luxembourgish nationality.

38 AT, CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, HU, IE, PL, SE, UK.

39 Special naturalisation is understood as the acquisition of citizenship based on other considerations than a minimum residence period in the country, such as family links, ethno-cultural connections or special contributions. Based on a report from the European Parliament (2018), 'and loss of citizenship in EU Member States – Key trends and issues', available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2018\)625116](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2018)625116)

40 BG, FI, SK.

41 AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL.

42 CZ, DE, EE, LU, LV, PL, PT, SE, UK.

43 CY (individuals born before the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus [16/08/1960] and who are of Cypriot origin from the male side of the family), DE, EL (foreigners with Greek national origin, such as belonging to the Greek diaspora for instance and who have foreign nationality but proven Greek ethnicity may obtain the Greek nationality), HR, HU, PL, PT.

44 BG, CY, DE, FR (even though it is referred to as acquisition of citizenship by declaration on the grounds of marriage in France), HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, PL.

45 CZ, DE, IT, LT, LU, PL, PT, SE, UK.

46 DE, EE, LU, PL, PT, UK.

47 (Also referred to as investor scheme) BG, CY, MT.

48 BE, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, UK.

3. CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP AFTER BIRTH THROUGH ORDINARY NATURALISATION



3.1. ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BASED ON A MINIMUM PERIOD OF RESIDENCE

To acquire citizenship through ordinary naturalisation, all Member States require a minimum period of residence in the country of application, which varies from three to ten years, and which may be interrupted. In the majority of Member States⁴⁹, as a general rule, the residence period for applicants is a minimum of five years prior to applying for the country's citizenship. In many Member States, the minimum period of residence differs for specific groups of third-country nationals, such as refugees, spouses and minors, stateless people, disabled people and people of a specific age.⁵⁰ Both Finland and Sweden have in place some specific (reduced) requirements for applicants from Nordic countries, i.e. Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Iceland, whose nationals need to demonstrate a period of residence of only two rather than five years. In Spain, the period of residence is reduced from ten years to two years for citizens of Latin American countries, Andorra, Equatorial Guinea, Philippines, and persons of Sephardic origin, and to 1 year for those who were born in Spanish territory. In Germany, special integration achievements, e.g. language skills above B1, can reduce the minimum period of residence required from eight years to seven or six years.



3.2. POSSIBILITY TO INTERRUPT THE MINIMUM PERIOD OF RESIDENCE

Short absences within the respective minimum period of residence, resulting from short-term holidays, family visits, etc. are permitted in all Member States, however the permitted periods of absences vary. While in some of the Member States⁵¹ an interruption of the period of residence for reasons other than for short-term holidays, family visits, etc. is not allowed, the majority of Member States⁵² do provide for a more substantial period of absence during the minimum period of residence.

In practice, difficulties arise for Member States when distinguishing between 'regular' short-term absences and a longer period of absence, thus representing an interruption.

In Member States that allow absences from the territory of the country of application during the minimum residence period, all but Estonia and Cyprus have some limitations on the maximum length of absence in place. The permitted periods of absences vary from six to 18 months, usually depending on the required minimum period of residence. In Luxembourg, a third-country national who intends to leave the country for more than six months is required to notify the municipality, declare their departure and render the residence permit to the Ministry in charge of immigration. Both in Austria and in Belgium, absences must not exceed 20 % of the minimum time of residence, i.e. six months in the case of Belgium. In the Czech Republic, the applicant has to prove an uninterrupted period of residence of at least 30 months during the five years preceding the application submission.

Some Member States which permit interruptions indicated that, when it comes to naturalisation applications, specific rules apply for the period immediately prior to the application. In Cyprus and Ireland, for instance, no interruptions are permitted in the year prior to the submission of the application. In this context, the Irish Department of Justice and Equality introduced a "six-week rule" in August 2016, which allowed applicants to be absent from the State for up to six weeks during the year immediately prior to the application, to allow for short term and temporary absences, such as holidays, business meetings, a family wedding or bereavement or medical emergency while abroad. Latvia is less strict and allows absences in justified circumstances. In Luxembourg, such short term or temporary absences are allowed as they are not considered as interrupting the legal residence in the country.

The increasing mobility of people can lead to difficulties for applicants trying to adhere to the rules. As experts from the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior noted, strict rules can make it difficult for applicants to provide corresponding evidence of their physical residence in the country. To counteract these challenges, some Member States provide for exceptions, covering situations such as cross-border mobility. For example, in Poland the maximum permitted period of absence does not apply to foreigners exercising professional duties or working outside of the Polish territory on the basis of an agreement with an employer located in Poland, as well as for their spouses or minor children. Absences going beyond the permitted period are further justified

49 BE, BG, CY, CZ (five years of permanent residence), FI, FR, IE, LU, LV, NL, PT, SE, UK.

50 AT, BG, DE, EL, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SK.

51 BG, HR, SK, SE.

52 AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LV, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, UK.

in Poland if related to the completion of an internship or studies at a Polish university. Germany allows prolonged absences as a result of compliance with the military service in the country of origin. In Greece, interruptions in the context of university studies are also permitted, in addition to reasons of *force majeure* (e.g. health reasons) under certain conditions. In Ireland, the Minister may, in his or her sole discretion, allow longer absences in exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.

In Finland, Luxembourg and Malta, absences going beyond the respective maximum period of absence do not 'reset the counters to zero', i.e. end the period of residence but merely interrupt it. Once the applicant has moved back to the Member State, the previous period of residence is then included in the total accumulated period of residence.

TABLE 2: MINIMUM PERIOD (INTERRUPTED/ CONTINUOUS) OF RESIDENCE IN THE COUNTRY OF APPLICATION ('STANDARD' CASES)

Member State	Minimum period of continuous residence in the country of application	Minimum period of residence (that may be interrupted) in the country of application
AT	6 or 10 years (with exceptions)	
BE		5 years with max. 6 months interruption
BG	3 or 5 years	
CY		5 years ⁵³
CZ	5 years	Or 7.5 years with the last 2.5 years without interruption
DE	8 years	Interruptions of max. 6 months permitted. In total, duration of absence may not exceed half of the minimum period required.
EE		8 years, of which at least five years on a permanent basis
EL	3, 7 or 12 years	
ES	10 years	
FI	5 years	Or 7 years with the last 2 years without interruption
FR	5 years	
HR	8 years	
HU	8 years	
IE	1 year, immediately prior to the application	4 years during the 8 years prior to the year immediately preceding the application
IT	10 years	
LT		10 years, interruptions possible
LU		5 years, including one year of continuous residence immediately prior to the application
LV		5 years, interruptions possible, but last year prior to applications needs to be continuous
MT	6 years	Continuously for at least one year and for four years out of the preceding six years
NL	5 years	
PL	3 years	
PT	5 years	
SE	5 years	
SK	8 years	
UK	5 years	

Source: EMN NCPs' reports

⁵³ The minimum period extends to seven years, for students, visitors and self-employed persons, as well as athletes, coaches, sports technicians, domestic workers, nurses and employees of Cypriot or foreign employers or offshore companies, residing in the Republic solely for the purpose of work, as well as spouses, children or other persons dependent of them.



3.3. RECOGNITION OF RESIDENCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF NATURALISATION

In all Member States taking part in the study, except Malta, the respective period of residence for general cases of ordinary naturalisation is based on legal residence (i.e. registration at the city hall, with the immigration authorities or in a population registry). In Malta, mere presence in the country is sufficient.

Recognition requirements of legal residence for the purpose of naturalisation vary from country to country, but usually entail that applicants must have registered in the country of application. In Portugal, for instance, legal residence evidenced by titles, visas or permits provided on entry, stay, departure or expulsion in the context of the foreign nationals and the right to asylum scheme are recognised to qualify for naturalisation. In France, residence is defined as “the centre of interests fixed stably in France” and is assessed by the competent authority by looking at the overall situation, i.e. length of residence on French territory, the family situation, the place where any minor children live, and the sufficiency and sustainability of the resources that enable the person to remain in France. The assessment of legal residence in Sweden is based on both an objective element (applicant must reside legally in the country) and a subjective element of having the intention to reside in Sweden (family, housing and employment).

In the majority of Member States,⁵⁴ the period of residence is based on **effective residence**, i.e. physical presence on the territory. Only in Hungary and Portugal it is enough for applicants

to hold a residence permit throughout the period of residence. Requirements for proving physical presence vary. For example, in the Netherlands, in addition to having legal residence, the applicant must have his or her centre of activities in the country while applicants for Bulgarian citizenship are required to have a certain income or occupation allowing them to make a living in the country.

The only Member States that conduct **physical checks** of the applicant's physical presence are Belgium and Croatia; in Belgium, this is done by the municipalities and in Croatia, by the police.



3.4. ACCEPTED PRIOR RESIDENCE STATUS

In all Member States, the permanent residence permit is a valid pre-existing legal residence status of the citizenship applicant. In Ireland, in practice, time spent as an international protection applicant is accepted as a form of prior residence status for persons subsequently granted refugee status. All but eight Member States also recognise temporary residence permits.⁵⁵ The number of years for which the permanent residence status has to be held in order for the third-country national to become eligible for citizenship ranges from five,⁵⁶ seven⁵⁷ or eight⁵⁸ years, with the exception of Poland, where only three years are required. In Austria, the fact that an individual holds a permanent or a fixed-term residence permit has no bearing on determining whether the person has fulfilled the minimum residence period required for acquiring citizenship, because the minimum period depends on the specific basis for acquisition and the specific requirements that the person concerned is expected to meet. Other common protection statuses that are eligible for citizenship applications were those for stateless persons⁵⁹ and for subsidiary protection.⁶⁰

54 AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IT, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, SK, UK.

55 CZ, EE, HR, HU, LT, LV, SE, SK.

56 CY, CZ, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, SE, UK.

57 EL.

58 DE, HR (can include temporary residence permit), HU, SK.

59 BE, DE, EL, FI, HU, LU, MT, NL, PT, SE, SK.

60 AT, CY, EL, IE, LU, MT, SE.

TABLE 3: ACCEPTED PRIOR RESIDENCE STATUSES AND THEIR REQUIRED DURATION

Member State	Permanent residence permit	Refugee status	Temporary residence permit	Stateless/Other protection statuses
AT	X (6 or 10 year)	X (10 years)	X (6 or 10 years)	Subsidiary protection status and other residence titles granted based on the Asylum Act 2005 (6 or 10 years)
AT	X (6 or 10 year)	X (10 years)	X (6 or 10 years)	Subsidiary protection status and other residence titles granted based on the Asylum Act 2005 (6 or 10 years)
BE	X (no min. period)	X (no min. period)	X (5 years)	
BG	X (5 years)	X (3 years)	X	Humanitarian status (5 years); Stateless persons (3 years)
CY	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	X (7 years)	X (5 years)
CZ	X (5 years)	X (5 years)		
DE	X (8 years); applicants who successfully attended an integration course (7 years); special integration achievements (6 years)	X (6 years)	X (8 years) Only time-limited residence permit which may also lead to permanent residence;	X Stateless person (6 years)
EE	X (5 years) ⁶¹	X	X ⁶²	
EL	X (7 years)	X (7 years)	X (7 or 12 years)	Subsidiary protection status or specific type of residence permit for humanitarian reasons (7 years); Stateless person (3 years);
ES	x	X (5 years)		
FI	X	X (4 years without interruption or 6 years in total after turning 15 and 2 years of uninterrupted period in the last 2 years before application)	Only if afterwards continuous residence permit is granted and if the applicant has a continuous residence permit for min 1 year prior to the decision on the application.	Individuals who need protection or who are involuntarily stateless (4 years or a total of 6 years after turning 15 years of age, and that the period of residence has been uninterrupted for the last 2 years.).
FR	X (5 years)	X (no minimum period)	X (5 years)	X (5 years)
HR	X (uninterrupted residence period of 8 years, which can include prior temporary residence status and residence period as beneficiaries of international protection)	Citizenship not granted on basis of sole asylum status. Only if permanent residence is granted plus uninterrupted residence period of 8 years, which can include prior residence period as beneficiaries of international protection).	Citizenship not granted on basis of temporary residence permit. Only if permanent residence is granted plus uninterrupted residence period of 8 years, which can include prior temporary residence status)	Citizenship not granted on basis of sole subsidiary protection status. Only if permanent residence is granted plus uninterrupted residence period of 8 years, which can include prior residence period as beneficiaries of international protection).
HU	X (8 years)	X (3 years)		Stateless (3 years);
IE	X (5 years)	X (3 Years)	X (5 years), with the exception of student permits	Subsidiary protection status (5 years); Permission to remain under the International Protection Act 2015 (5 years)
IT	X (10 years of temporary or permanent permit)	X (5 years)		Stateless 3 years
LT	X (citizenship is granted only to holders of permanent residence permit plus uninterrupted residence period of 10 years which can include prior temporary residence).	X (refugees are issued a permanent residence permit and must have uninterrupted residence period for 10 years).	X (citizenship is granted only to holders of permanent residence permit plus uninterrupted residence period of 10 years which can include prior temporary residence).	X (citizenship is granted only to holders of permanent residence permit plus uninterrupted residence period of 5 years which can include prior temporary residence status. For subsidiary protection regular procedure applied).
LU	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	Subsidiary protection status (5 years); Stateless persons (5 years)
LV	X (5 years)	X (5 years)		
MT	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	Stateless persons (5 years)
NL	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	Stateless persons (3 years)
PL	X (3 years)	X (2 years pursuant to a permanent residence permit obtained on the basis of a refugee status)	X (10 years, but the condition is to obtain a permanent residence permit before submitting the application)	X (2 years pursuant to a permanent residence permit obtained on the basis of a subsidiary protection; humanitarian status)
PT	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	X (5 years)	Stateless persons (4 years)
SE	X (5 years)	X (4 years)		Stateless persons (4 years)
SK	X (8 years)	X (4 years)		Stateless persons (3 years)
UK	X (5 years)	X (5 years)		Stateless persons born in the UK or a British overseas territory (5 years) Stateless persons born outside of the UK or British overseas territory (3 years) Other beneficiaries of international protection statuses/humanitarian protection (5 years)

Source : EMN NCP's National Reports

61 In Estonia a person who wishes to acquire Estonian citizenship must hold a long-term residence permit or the right of permanent residence.

62 In Estonia the requirement of holding a long-term residence permit or the right of permanent residence does not apply in respect of applicants for Estonian citizenship who settled in Estonia or were born in Estonia before 1 July 1990.

63 In Luxembourg, persons with refugee status, subsidiary protection status and people with stateless status benefit from the simplified and accelerated 'option' procedure and do not apply for ordinary naturalisation.

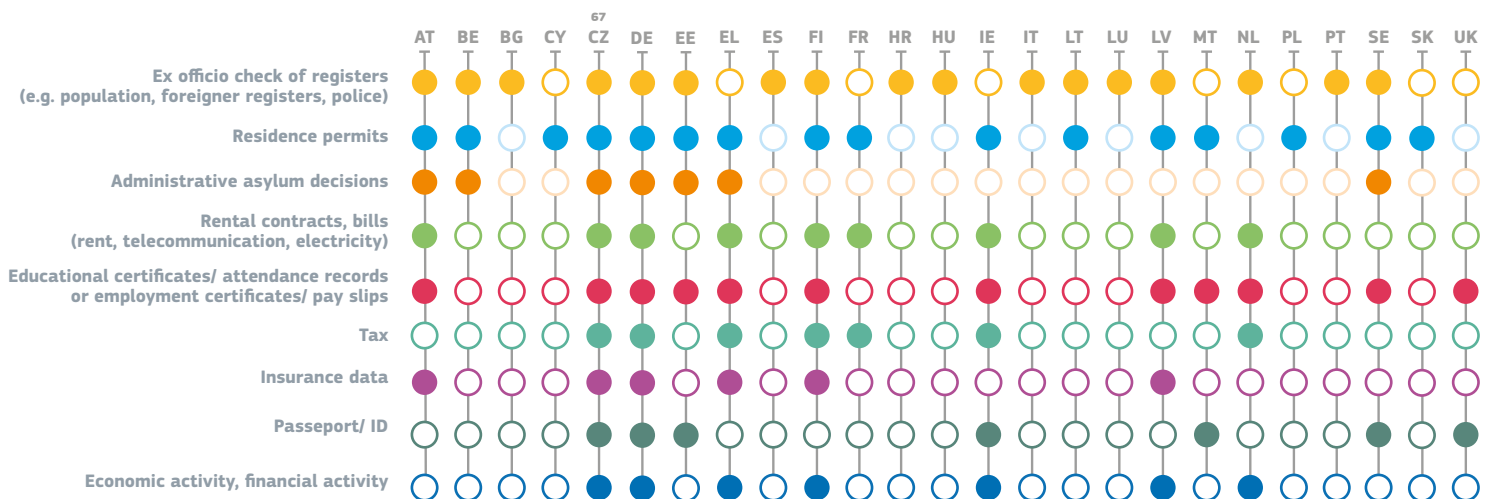


3.5. PROOF THAT THE REQUIRED PERIOD OF RESIDENCE HAS BEEN MET

Differences exist regarding the types of documents Member States accepted as proof of the period of residence. Most of the Member States accept more than one single type of proof,

including, for example entries in the registers (e.g. population register or foreigner registers) that are usually checked ex-officio as sufficient proof for the period of residence.⁶⁴ Some Member States also accept residence permits,⁶⁵ as well as certificates or other evidence obtained in the context of educational and professional activities undertaken in the country of application⁶⁶. Apart from that, some Member States accept proof of the applicant's residential situation (e.g. rental contracts, utility bills of rental charges), passports or proof that the applicants conducted economic activity in the country.

FIGURE 4: ADMISSIBLE DOCUMENTS TO PROVE PERIOD OF RESIDENCE



Source: EMN NCPs' reports



3.6. LANGUAGE

In 22 Member States,⁶⁸ knowledge of the official language(s) is a prerequisite for citizenship through ordinary naturalisation, demonstrating the importance that national governments place on ensuring that new citizens are able to understand and communicate with the new government and fellow citizens, and hence facilitating integration. In Cyprus, Ireland and Sweden, applicants do not have to meet any language requirements for ordinary naturalisation. Ireland's Migrant Integration Strategy 2017-2020 includes an action to explore the possibility of introducing a language (and civics) requirement. Similarly, Sweden, where language requirements formerly existed but ceased to apply in the 1980s, indicated that their re-introduction has regularly been discussed since then, and in October 2019, the Swedish government appointed a commission of inquiry to determine whether a language test would strengthen the status of Swedish citizenship and promote a more inclusive society.⁶⁹

In Bulgaria, Cyprus Malta and the Slovak Republic, applicants are required to at least have an elementary knowledge of the language, for instance in Bulgaria, allowing applicants

to communicate at a basic level. In the Slovak Republic, the applicant has to pass a test which contains different elements, such as personal interview, reading a text (e.g. from a newspaper) and writing a summary. A committee then decides whether the language skills of the applicant are sufficient.

In Member States that have specifications regarding the level of language required, this was usually an A2⁷⁰ or B1⁷¹ level or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In Finland, where Swedish is an official language, applicants may also meet the language requirements by having a B1 knowledge of Swedish, however, the language certificate has to be issued by the Finnish authorities.

If language requirements are too high or too strict, this might carry the risk of restricting access to citizenship. Some Member States have exemptions in place that could counteract those risks. In several Member States, exemptions from the language requirements are possible for people with severe health impairments and/or disabilities⁷² as well as for elderly people⁷³, usually from 60 to 65 years onwards. In Finland applicants are also permitted to demonstrate their capacities in Finnish or Finnish-Swedish in sign language.

64 AT, BG, CY, CZ, DE, FI, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, NL, PT, SE.

65 CZ, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, PL. In FR, a residence permit alone is not sufficient but has to be accompanied by proof of residence and resources, as well as tax record.

66 AT, EL, FI, LV, MT, UK.

67 Dependant on the individual case.

68 AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, LT, MT (English and Maltese), NL, PL, PT, SK, UK.

69 The interim report is due to be presented to the government on 15 October 2020 (Terms of reference of a commission of inquiry, "Kommittédirektiv 2019:70 Språk- och samhällskunskapskrav för svenskt medborgarskap och andra frågor om medborgarskap, 24 October 2019, available at: <https://www.regeringen.se/4aaf68/contentassets/d3e450da71d54d04bf88125bc8875ac8/sprak--och-samhallskunskapskrav-for-svenskt-medborgarskap-och-andra-fragor-om-medborgarskap-dir.-2019-70.pdf>, last accessed 30 October 2019).

70 BE, ES, IT, LT, LU (speaking), NL, PT.

71 AT, CZ, DE, EE, EL (speaking and reading), FR (oral and written), HR, LV, LU (listening), PL, UK.

72 AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, LT, LU, LV, NL, PT, UK.

73 BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, HR, LT, LV, PT, UK.

Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom also have exemptions in place for applicants originating from countries where the language of the country of application is spoken. For example, in Spain citizens from Latin American countries are exempted.

In Member States that have a language requirement in place, all but Malta require applicants to provide proof of their knowledge of the national language. While Maltese law stipulates that an applicant should have adequate knowledge of the English or Maltese language, a mere declaration upon application is sufficient to demonstrate it.

In most Member States, official language certificates are accepted as evidence of sufficient knowledge of the national language. In some Member States, applicants have to pass a specific language test targeted to the acquisition of citizenship.⁷⁴ With some exceptions,⁷⁵ Member States accept schooling or university certificates from national educational institutions or evidence of work experience conducted within the country as proof of knowledge of the national language. In Belgium, one of the options for proving knowledge of one of the national languages is the completion of an integration course. In Italy, applicants who have signed an integration agreement or who hold an EU long-term residence permit are exempted from certification. In Hungary and the Netherlands, the language requirement is met once the applicant has passed a citizenship test which also included a language test. In the Slovak Republic, authorities assess the applicant's command of the Slovak language during a personal interview during which the applicant is asked personal questions, plus questions on the country's history, geography and social and political development. In Germany, applicants may be exempted from the need to provide an official language certificate if the authority found during the personal interview, that the applicant demonstrably fulfils the language requirement.



3.7. CITIZENSHIP/ INTEGRATION TEST

In 13 Member States,⁷⁶ citizenship applicants are required to pass a citizenship or integration test for all naturalisation grounds. Usually, the tests are designed to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the country's political system, history, culture and values as well as underlying rights and obligations. In Latvia, applicants must additionally demonstrate their knowledge of the national anthem. In the context of the Dutch integration exam which is required for most third-country nationals within three years after they get a permit for a non-temporary purpose, applicants have to participate in an introduction to Dutch core values and sign a participation statement certifying that they will respect them and actively participate in Dutch society. Furthermore, as another component of the integration exam, applicants are obliged to pass the 'Orientation on the Dutch Labour Market (ONA)' exam, about working and finding work in the Netherlands. In order to qualify for Dutch citizenship through ordinary naturalisation, applicants are obliged to pass the naturalisation test. The test contains broadly the same components at the same level as the integration exam, except for the participation statement.

The design of the tests varies across Member States. Usually, it takes place in the form of a written, multiple-choice exam,⁷⁷ while some Member States⁷⁸ verify the applicant's knowledge in the form of an interview. In Luxembourg, applicants have the choice to either attend a 24-hour citizenship course covering topics such as fundamental rights, the state, local institutions and history of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, or pass a test covering the

above-mentioned topics. While no formal citizenship test exists in Belgium and Slovak Republic, both pointed out that the authorities verify the applicant's level of 'social integration'. In Belgium, the authorities look at the applicant's activities, such as education or work experience in the five years preceding the naturalisation decision. In the Slovak Republic, the authorities check social integration by asking questions as part of the process of verification of the applicant's command of the Slovak language.



3.8. OTHER CONDITIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Applicants must fulfil requirements regarding **good conduct and/or public order** as a prerequisite for acquiring citizenship in every Member State taking part in the study. The assessment of the conduct nevertheless varies from one Member State to another. In some Member States, applicants have to demonstrate the absence of any criminal record prior to their application in order to satisfy the good conduct requirement, while in others, applicants must also demonstrate the fulfilment of their civic obligations such as payment of taxes and debts.

Requirement of good character in Ireland

There is no statutory definition of good character in **Ireland**. The Department of Justice and Equality's assessment of the good character requirement currently relies on information from *An Garda Síochána* (the Irish police). Case law has confirmed that the factors or criteria to consider when assessing good character are at the discretion of the Minister for Justice and Equality. Further case law has also held that, when assessing criminal convictions, consideration ought to be given to the nature of the offence and length of time since its commission, policy adopted for assessing criminal convictions should not be applied mechanistically and inflexibly. On occasion, applicants may be requested to attend for an interview with officials of the Department of Justice and Equality.

Requirement of good conduct in Belgium

In **Belgium**, good conduct was mainly verified by looking at the applicant's criminal record, in order to find conduct deemed to constitute a 'serious personal fact'. Previously undefined, leaving it to the courts' discretion, a 2012 reform brought some more certainty by listing situations which were deemed to indicate that the applicant had committed serious personal facts, including the impossibility of verification of the applicant's identity or main residence, or the applicant's support of a movement or association deemed a threat to public order. Belgium reported that, despite the clarification, it was not definite whether courts had any discretion in assessing the presence of a serious personal fact.

In 15 Member States⁷⁹ third-country nationals are required to legally or symbolically **commit to certain values**. Usually, this entails commitment to fundamental rights and freedoms, duties, general constitutional principles, democratic values and laws. Applicants are also required to pledge formal allegiance to the respective Member State as part of a condition to acquire

74 EE, HR, LU, LV, LT, SK.

75 EL, LV (only schooling exam certificates accepted), LU, PT, SK.

76 AT, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, HU (with exceptions), LT, LU, LV, NL, UK.

77 AT, CZ, DE, EE, ES, HR, HU, LT, LU, LV, NL, UK.

78 BG, EL, FR, HU, LV.

79 BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HU, IE, LT, LV, NL, SK, UK.

citizenship in 16 Member States.⁸⁰ The pledge usually takes place in the form of an oath of allegiance. While the exact content of the oaths differs, it usually covers the promise to observe the Constitution and laws, territorial integrity, culture and customs and to fulfil the duties as a national citizen once citizenship is acquired. While such a pledge is not a prerequisite of citizenship in France, local French authorities organise a ceremony to welcome new citizens in the course of which the Charter of Rights and Duties of the French Citizen is presented. However, participation in the ceremony is not mandatory.

Requirement of good conduct in Austria

While in **Austria**, provisions related to good conduct contain requirements both for the conferral of citizenship as well as provisions that contain grounds for refusal of the citizenship application, the recognised evidence varied greatly across the provinces. The majority *inter alia*, made requests to the police administration of the province and accepted certificates of good conduct, affidavit or excerpts from police records from other countries. In the exceptional case that citizenship was granted based on the authorities' discretion, the authorities considered the applicant's overall conduct, both in view of the common good and public interest, as well the applicant's social, economic and cultural integration into life in Austria.

The **applicant's economic or financial situation or standard of living** is taken into account in 14 Member States⁸¹ when deciding whether to grant citizenship. This information usually helps authorities to assess whether the applicant is likely to rely on social assistance during a certain reference period. Only in Austria does the law specify a minimum income level. Austria reported that the lack of an adequately secure means of subsistence was cited by some provincial governments as one of the most common reasons for refusing citizenship applications. To prove a sufficient level of financial independence, in general, regular payslips, employment agreements, confirmations of pension or other insurance payments, or evidence that the applicant has sufficient assets were *inter alia* accepted.

Finnish law requires applicants to prove they were in receipt of a reliable income stream during the period of residence, whereas in Belgium, authorities do not examine the applicants' income or assets, but applicants need to sufficiently demonstrate their 'economic participation'. This could be done for instance by having worked during a certain period of time as an employee or civil servant.⁸² The standard of living of the applicant is not taken into account; however, applicants who had not worked during the last five years and depended exclusively on the assistance of social security would not be admitted.

In France, the applicant's financial independence can be demonstrated by salaries, the return to employment benefit - ARE, commercial and non-commercial profits and income from land or movable property. However, any resources must be of French origin and derive from a stable profession in France. In Ireland, while not set out in law, in practice it is a requirement to submit proof of means of income as well as information on social welfare payments. These documents support the overall assessment of the application, rather than an assessment of the applicants' financial situation specifically.

In Italy, the minimum income level requested to obtain citizenship on residence grounds, is not specified by law but was regulated by the Ministry of the Interior, taking into account the relevant jurisprudence. It corresponds to the minimum income for participation in health care expenditure provided by law.

Bulgaria applies a requirement in the framework of public health, asking applicants to provide a medical document, demonstrating that they did not suffer from contagious, sexually transmitted diseases and mental illnesses.

In Ireland and the United Kingdom, applicants have to certify their intention to continue residing in the country after naturalisation.

With the exception of Ireland, all Member States have **specific exclusion criteria** set out in their laws that prevented conferral of citizenship (see Section 4.4. 'Negative decisions' below). These usually include threats to national security and public order. For example in Austria, applicants cannot be granted citizenship in cases where they had committed offences specified under aliens' police law; they had close relationships with an extremist or terrorist group; or where a final judgement had been handed down against them concerning a serious administrative offence of particular gravity.

80 AT, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, SK, UK.

81 AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV (person's income should be legal), PL, SK.

82 This is the case for the ordinary procedure in short track (with 5 years legal residence requirement).

4. PROCEDURAL ASPECTS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP



4.1. PROCEDURE FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORDINARY NATURALISATION

The procedure for the acquisition of citizenship through naturalisation in the Member States involves a wide variety of actors from all levels of government, starting at the local level and ending with the head of state or government. Two broad clusters can be identified: firstly, those Member States that take a rather horizontal approach, whereby the application is largely processed by one actor/entity,⁸³ and secondly, those Member States that take a vertical/bottom-up approach, meaning that the application is passed from one governmental level to the next.⁸⁴ Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, this section briefly outlines the impact of the containment measures taken throughout the EU on the processing of citizenship applications and appeal hearings in Member States (see Section 4.6).

The procedure for the acquisition of citizenship through ordinary naturalisation is initiated in the same manner in all Member States, namely through the submission of an application by the third-country national to the responsible authority within the Member State or in some cases⁸⁵ also to the respective consular representations in third countries.

In the vast majority of Member States, the application has to be submitted in person, by post, or online (see Section 4.2). Actors at the local level, in particular municipal authorities, play an important role at this stage in many Member States, as they accept⁸⁶ and often also carry out an initial review⁸⁷ of the application to ensure it is complete and the basic requirements have been fulfilled before passing this on to the decision-making body. In a number of Member States, the application is submitted to, and often also checked, by the Ministry of Justice⁸⁸ or Ministry of Interior.⁸⁹ In Finland, Lithuania and Sweden, it is the Immigration Service that accepts applications. In Estonia it is the Police and Border Guard Board that accepts applications.

In the case of the Netherlands and Poland, the municipality takes an even stronger role, issuing a recommendation or administrative decision on the application to the decision-making body, i.e. the Immigration and Naturalisation Service of the Ministry of Justice and the President respectively.

As a second step, the applications undergo a thorough check, both to ensure their completeness and a validation of the personal information provided, concerning identity, legal residence, language skills, etc. As mentioned, this task is usually carried out by the same actor to which the application was submitted, i.e. local authorities, Ministries of Interior or Justice, or the Immigration Services, which often consult other relevant bodies, such as the police, intelligence services and tax authorities to verify the information provided in the application. In a few Member States, a personal interview⁹⁰ and/or examination⁹¹ to test the applicant's knowledge of the host country's constitution or language is an integral part of the application process, while in many others, applicants have to submit proof of such knowledge in the form of a certificate (see below).

As a third step, the decision on the application is issued. The decision-making body varies across Member States, ranging from the Ministry of Justice⁹² and Ministry of Interior⁹³ to the government⁹⁴ and immigration services.⁹⁵ In one Member State, dedicated Citizenship Councils or Committees take the final decision.⁹⁶ In Austria and Germany, as federal states, the provincial government or local naturalisation authority takes the final decision, while in Belgium, this is the responsibility of the public prosecutor, although this decision may be reviewed by courts.

The final decision on the citizenship application is usually made by the President or responsible Minister in some Member States – sometimes without the possibility of appeal (see below) – pointing to the fact that naturalisation is still a matter which touches directly upon the sovereignty of the state.⁹⁷

In some Member States, the naturalisation process is only finalised upon completion of a fourth step, namely the mandatory participation in a citizenship ceremony and/or an oath of allegiance.⁹⁸ Ireland noted that in addition to being an opportunity to welcome new citizens, ceremonies facilitate the making of a declaration of fidelity to the State and physical verification of

83 AT, BG, CY, DE (can vary across federal states), ES, FI, IE, IT, LV, MT, PT, SE, UK.

84 BE, CZ, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL.

85 BG, FR, HR, PT, SE, SK.

86 BE, CZ, DE, FR, HU, LU, NL, PL, SK (District Authority at the regional seat).

87 BE, CY, CZ, DE, FR, LU, NL, PL, SK (District Authority at the regional seat).

88 BG, ES, IE, NL, PT.

89 CY, CZ, EL (regionalised directorates of the Ministry of Interior), HR, IT, LT, UK.

90 BG, EL, SK.

91 AT, EE, LV (case-by-case basis), SK.

92 ES, IE, LU, PT.

93 CY, CZ, EL, FR, HR, IT (proposed by Ministry of Interior and granted by decree of the President of the Republic), SK.

94 EE (the Police and Border Guard makes proposal to the Government who takes final decision), HU, LV.

95 FI, LV, NL, SE, UK.

96 CZ.

97 BG (vice president), CY (Minister of Interior), HU (President), FR (Minister of Interior), IE (Minister of Justice and Equality), IT (President of the Republic), LU (Minister of Justice), LV (Cabinet of Ministers), LT (President), NL (the King ultimately), PL (President), PT (Minister of Justice).

98 AT, CY, CZ, DE (only oath of allegiance is mandatory), EL, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, SK, UK.

the applicant. In four Member States, citizenship ceremonies are organised voluntarily at a local level.⁹⁹ Finland and Luxembourg noted that some municipalities choose to organise these on their own accord, but it is not a legal requirement. In Belgium, a draft bill was currently under discussion in Parliament, which would require municipalities to organise a public ceremony to swear allegiance to the Constitution. In France, the organisation of such ceremonies is already mandatory, although participation is not.

4.2. ACCESSIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PROCEDURE

Various factors have an impact on the accessibility and efficiency of the application procedure. Firstly, digitisation plays a role both in the accessibility and the efficiency of the procedure. The study found that the possibility to submit the application for ordinary naturalisation online facilitates the process by opening another channel for application. Currently, five Member States provide this possibility, either by filling in an online application form¹⁰⁰ or by sending the application via email.¹⁰¹ In the remaining Member States, the application has to be submitted in person or by post; in fact, in seven Member States, the submission in person is a legislative requirement,¹⁰² which allows for an immediate verification of identity, as stated by Luxembourg. However, a trend towards further digitisation can be observed, with Cyprus, France, various federal states in Germany, Lithuania, Ireland and Portugal reporting plans to enable online applications in the near future. The application procedure itself can arguably be made more efficient through digitisation, in particular by facilitating the coordination of the various actors involved and the transfer of files between them. Portugal, Italy, Germany¹⁰³, the Netherlands and Sweden already have a digital system in place to process applications, although the latter three only to a limited extent. However, along with France, which is planning to digitise the whole procedure soon, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Sweden are committed to further expanding the use of digital tools.

The time period for processing applications differs greatly across Member States. In 15 cases,¹⁰⁴ there is a legally prescribed time period for the processing of the application, ranging from a minimum of six months in Austria and Belgium to 24 months in the Slovak Republic and 48 months in Italy. It should be noted

that in some Member States, such as Austria, the applications of dependent minors have to be processed within a shorter timeframe. Four Member States reported that these prescribed time periods were not always met for all applications,¹⁰⁵ for example due to increasing complexity of the cases and poor cooperation on the part of the applicants. Eight Member States do not have a legally prescribed time period,¹⁰⁶ and it is interesting to note that this does not necessarily lead to longer processing times in some cases.

Eight Member States¹⁰⁷ provide for a fast-track procedure, although this is reportedly used very rarely and only for specific reasons (e.g. for medical reasons in Greece and Portugal) or for certain groups of applicants (e.g. for minors, Roma, stateless person in Croatia).¹⁰⁸ Greece noted fast-track procedure implies giving time priority to specific cases, for example for cases linked to attendance in schools and universities. The reluctance of Member States to use such a fast-track procedure could be an indication of the level of importance attributed to this decision and the consequent need for a thorough handling of the application.

The total costs for an application for citizenship is another factor which varies significantly across Member States, ranging from no fee at all¹⁰⁹ to up to € 1 500.¹¹⁰ However, it is important to note that the costs for the acquisition of citizenship often go beyond the application fee and can include an administrative fee, fees to be paid upon the receipt of citizenship, and other fees, for example for participation in the citizenship ceremony or language- and citizenship courses and tests that have to be taken as part of the procedure. Thus, the total costs for acquiring citizenship can amount to at least € 1 000 in some Member States,¹¹¹ while in others there are only minimum costs of up to € 100. Luxembourg noted that the fees for language courses and tests can be reimbursed upon request. Austria, where fees can add up to more than € 2 000 for third-country nationals depending on the province, reported that the federal fees charged for the citizenship procedure are among the highest official fees charged. Germany, where dual citizenship is only allowed under certain circumstances (see Section 5) noted that the cost for the applicants can also increase as some countries of origin have fees for the release from the former citizenship. In a number of Member States, the fees are lower or completely waived for certain groups of applicants, for example beneficiaries of international protection or stateless persons.¹¹²

99 DE, EE, PL, SE.

100 ES, EE, FI, IT, SE, UK.

101 EE.

102 AT, BG, CZ, HR, LU, NL, SK.

103 few Federal States in Germany have a digital system in place to process parts of the application.

104 AT, BE, BG, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IT, LU, LT, LV, NL, SK.

105 AT, EL, ES, NL.

106 CY, DE, HR, HU, IE, PT, SE, UK.

107 DE, EL, EE (for a minor younger than 15 years of age the decision is made within 3 months, usual procedural time is 6 month), FI, NL, PT, SE, SK.

108 Please note that Croatian law does not provide for special fast-tracked procedures per se; the applications of Roma and stateless persons are only prioritised in comparison to other applications, while all legal requirements apply.

109 CZ, LU, PL.

110 UK.

111 AT, CY, IE, UK.

112 CZ, EL, IE, LV, NL.

TABLE 5: FEES CHARGED FOR THE CITIZENSHIP PROCEDURE (IN EUROS)

Member State	Application Fee	Administrative fee	Fee upon receipt of citizenship	Other fees
AT	€ 125.60	€ 52 - € 1 300	€ 247 - € 1 115	n/a
BE	€ 150	No fee	No fee	Local municipal authority fee: € 5- € 82 (example range, depends on local municipal authority)
BG	€ 50	No fee	€ 125	n/a
CZ	No fee	No fee	Approx. € 80 €	Czech language exams (approx. €132) and Czech civic knowledge (approx. €64)
DE	€ 255 € 51 for minors	n/a	n/a	e.g. citizenship test: € 25; Fees for the release from former citizenship
EE	€ 13 (a person under 18 years of age is exempt from state fee)	No fee	No fee	n/a
EL	€ 550 (100 for recognised refugees and stateless persons and co-ethnic Greeks (i.e. aliens of Greek ethnic origin))	No fee	No fee	n/a
ES	€ 102	No fee	No fee	Language test: € 55 Sociocultural test € 85.
FI	€ 420 (electronic)/520 (paper)	No fee	No fee	n/a
FR	€ 55	No fee	No fee	n/a
HR	No fee	No fee	Approx. € 141	n/a
HU	No fee	No fee	No fee	Cost of citizenship test: approx. € 221 (equals to 50 % of minimum wage)
IE	€175	No fee	€ 950 for adults (refugees and stateless persons exempt) € 200 for minors or widow/widower of Irish citizen	n/a
IT	€ 250	€ 16	No fee	n/a
LT	€ 62	No fee	No fee	n/a
LU	No fee	No fee	No fee	Language test: € 75 (possibility for reimbursement upon request)
LV	€ 28.46 (€ 4.27 for schoolchildren, students, disabled persons, pensioners)	No fee	No fee	No fee
MT	€ 450	No fee	€ 50	Oath of allegiance: € 10
NL	Standard fee: € 881 Together with a partner: € 1 124,- Accompanied child under 18: € 130 For stateless individuals/asylum seekers with a residence permit: € 655 Stateless individual/asylum seeker with residence permit together with a partner: € 899	No fee	No fee	Writing exam: € 50 Speaking exam: € 60 Listening exam: € 50 Reading exam: € 50 Social/cultural test: € 40 Labour Market Orientation test: € 40 Total: € 290 Participation statement if applicable
PL	n/a (only if lodged abroad: € 360)	No fee	No fee	n/a
PT	€ 250	No fee	No fee	n/a
SE	€ 150	No fee	No fee	n/a
SK	No fee	No fee	€ 700	n/a
UK	Approx. € 1 498	No fee	No fee	Fee for participating in citizenship ceremony: approx. € 90

Source: EMN NCPs' reports



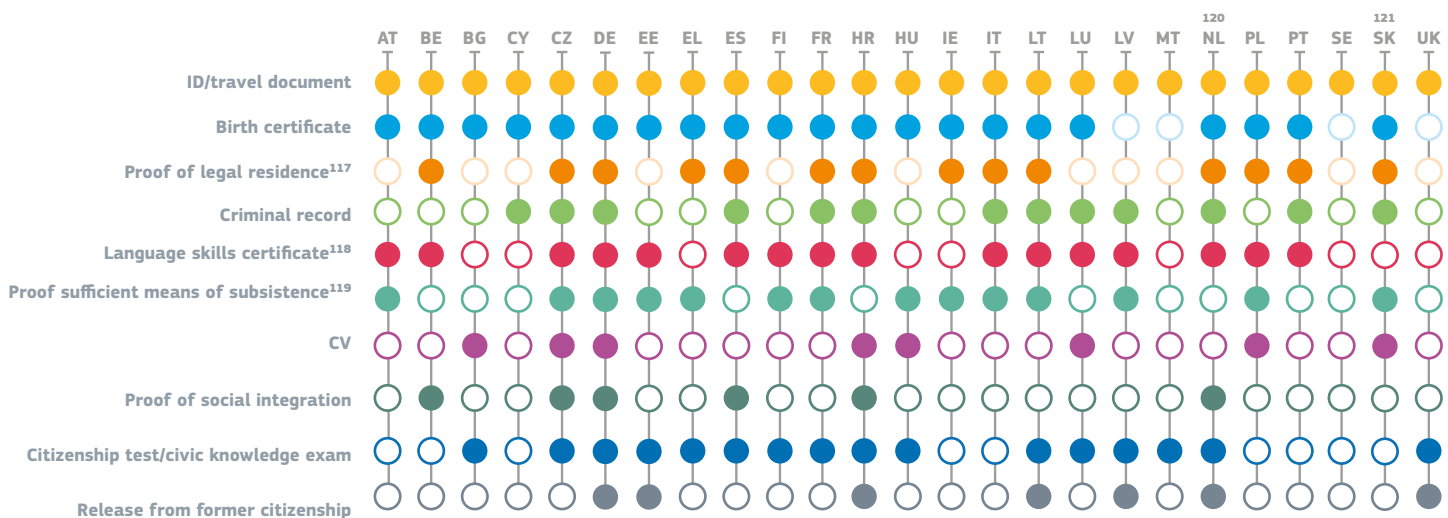
4.3. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR THE NATURALISATION APPLICATION

In most Member States, citizenship applicants have to provide a number of different documents to prove their identity, the fulfilment of legal conditions (e.g. period of legal residence) and sufficient economic and social integration.

In addition to an identity document, usually in the form of a valid travel document or identity card, applicants are required to submit a birth certificate in many Member States,¹¹³ as well as proof of legal residence¹¹⁴ (see Section 3) and proof of a clean criminal record.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, documents evidencing sufficient

economic and social integration often have to be submitted, although these can vary from one case to another. Language certificates and evidence of secure means of subsistence are most commonly requested. Those Member States which require the third-country national to undertake a citizenship test or civic knowledge exam – either in the framework of the citizenship procedure or beforehand for acquiring permanent residence – usually also request a certificate of successful completion. Cyprus and the Slovak Republic require uncommon documentation, namely copies of newspaper advertisements in two consecutive publications which report that the applicant has filed an application for naturalisation and a detailed statement of arrivals and departures of the applicant to and from Cyprus in case of the former, and information about the reasons for applying for citizenship as a part of the application for citizenship in case of the latter.

FIGURE 5: REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR THE SUBMISSION OF A CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION¹¹⁶



Source: EMN NCPs' reports

Nine Member States observed challenges related to the verification of identity, either due to missing, fraudulent or inconsistent documents.¹²² Member States implement different practices as regards the type of documents accepted as proof of identity and their leniency in terms of allowing alternative proof in case a valid identity- or travel document is not available. For example, while Poland noted that no alternative proof is accepted, Finland, Ireland and Sweden may allow the submission

of alternative documents, such as birth certificates, an affidavit in lieu of a birth certificate or passport,¹²³ or information from a close family member,¹²⁴ as proof. In Sweden, refugees can also submit expired identity documents. Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg reported that no challenges have been observed as the application for citizenship for third-country nationals is always preceded by a residence permit procedure, during which the identity will have already been established.

¹¹³ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, PT, SK.

¹¹⁴ BE, CZ, EL, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, PL, PT, SK.

¹¹⁵ CZ, CZ, DE, EL, ES, HR, IT, LT, LU, NL, PT, SK. In BE, EL and FI, the applicant is not required to submit a copy of his or her criminal record; however, the authorities will check the criminal record on their own.

¹¹⁶ This is not an exhaustive list of all required documents but merely presents the most common ones. Other documents, such as marriage certificates, may be required on a case-by-case basis. In Germany, the required documentation can vary across federal states.

¹¹⁷ See Section 3.5 for the documents accepted by the respective Member States to prove period of residence

¹¹⁸ See Section 3.6 for more details regarding language requirements.

¹¹⁹ This entails proof of sufficient means of subsistence, tax statements, work contracts, etc.

¹²⁰ No separate language skills certificate is necessary, however a civic integration diploma (or other proof of civic integration) is, which includes a language test.

¹²¹ A certificate of being released from the state union with the Czechoslovak Republic, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic or the Slovak Republic, or the Naturalisation Certificate or a confirmation of the acquisition of another state's citizenship if the applicant is a former citizen.

¹²² AT, DE, EL, FI, HU, NL, PL, SE, UK.

¹²³ IE.

¹²⁴ SE.

4.4. NEGATIVE DECISIONS – REASONS AND FOLLOW-UP

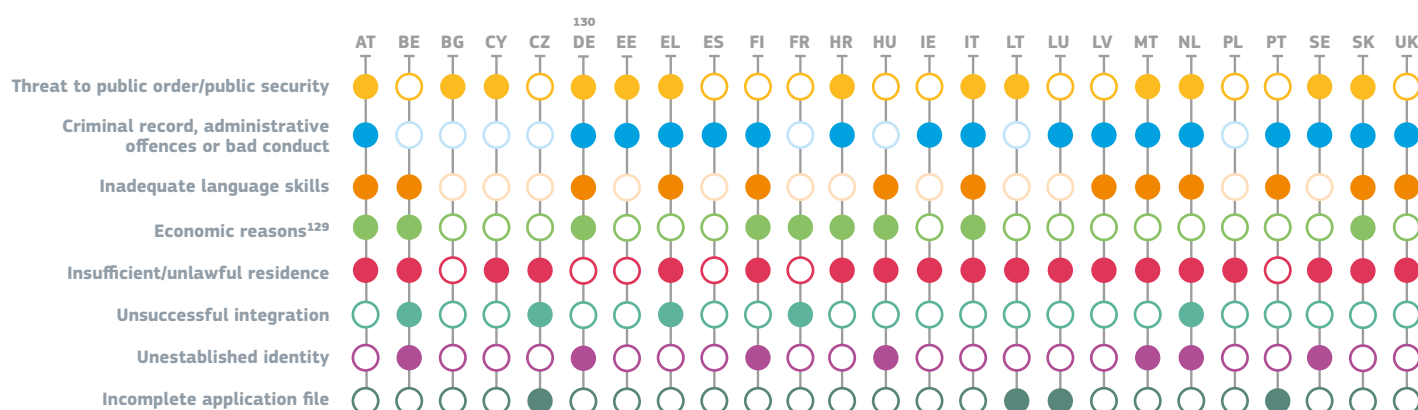
Comparable data on the negative decision rate of citizenship applications falling within the scope of this study is not available. However, some Member State were able to provide indications in this regard, e.g. 14% in Sweden (in 2019), 7% in the United Kingdom (average rate 2008-2018), 6% in Ireland (in 2017) and 4.5 % in Estonia (average rate 2014-2018). In all Member States but Belgium and Germany, the decision for granting citizenship is at least partly based on discretion, meaning that a negative decision can still be issued, even if all legal requirements are fulfilled. In Belgium and Germany, the applicant has the right to be naturalised if all legal requirements are fulfilled.¹²⁵ However, Belgium notes that some of the requirements leave room for discretionary assessment, making the discretion indirect. The same applies for the Netherlands.

The majority of Member States apply conditional discretion and thus a rights-based approach, which implies that in principle, if the minimum requirements are met, citizenship will be granted, and a refusal will often have to be duly justified.¹²⁶ However, as noted by Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Spain,

making use of the discretionary power is very rare and only applied in exceptional cases. Eight Member States generally follow absolute discretion, meaning that the acquisition of citizenship is based on privilege rather than rights, even if all legal requirements are fulfilled.¹²⁷ As a consequence, in four out of the eight Member States following absolute discretion, applicants also do not have the right to appeal a negative decision.¹²⁸ Bulgaria provides a possibility for appeal before the Administrative Court if the Minister of Justice does not render an opinion on time, as well as if the proceedings for the application before the Minister are terminated. The court only verifies the course of the proceedings and pronounces it with a definition that is final. Hungary, although applying conditional discretion, also does not grant the right to appeal.

The most common ground for a negative decision on a citizenship application is an insufficient or unlawful period of residence, followed by not meeting the 'good conduct' requirement and being considered a threat to public security. In 13 Member States, inadequate language skills, and in five Member States, 'unsuccessful integration', were reported as among the most common grounds in those Member States for a negative decision. Other grounds for refusal are the existence of a criminal record, the inability to prove identity, or incomplete application files.

FIGURE 6: MOST COMMON GROUNDS FOR A NEGATIVE DECISION ON A CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION



Source: EMN NCPs' reports

4.5. SUPPORT PROVIDED DURING APPLICATION PROCESS

In most Member States, support provided to third-country nationals prior to and during the application process is limited to information available on the website of the responsible ministry or authority.¹³¹ Seven Member States reported the availability of a helpdesk via phone or email, which answers queries related to the acquisition of citizenship and the applicable procedure.¹³² Eight

Member States offer the possibility of personal consultations,¹³³ and in Estonia, Germany and Luxembourg, handbooks and flyers are also available. The additional support provided by Latvia in the form of information days for citizenship applicants is unique, much like the interactive 'Citizenship Guide' available in Sweden,¹³⁴ which provides a step-by-step procedure where potential applicants can reply to simple questions about their age, current citizenship, type of residence permit, etc. in order to determine their likelihood of a successful application. Moreover, Hungary offers preparatory consultations to help applicants prepare for the citizenship test. However, for all above-mentioned support, it should be noted that this is generally available to all groups of citizenship applicants and not necessarily targeted

¹²⁵ In Germany, it is also possible to obtain "discretionary naturalisation". If there is a public interest in the naturalisation and at least some of the requirements are fulfilled, more favourable conditions may apply, and the decision can be based on the discretion of the authority.

¹²⁶ AT, BE, CY, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, LT, LU, LV, NL.

¹²⁷ CY, CZ, IE, MT, SE, SK, UK.

¹²⁸ IE, MT, PL (but only in case of granting Polish citizenship by the President of the Republic of Poland), UK.

¹²⁹ This includes insufficient income, social assistance recipients, or tax debt.

¹³⁰ Information is based on data obtained from some Federal states.

¹³¹ AT (additional assistance is provided by groups such as State-supported platforms and religious organisations), BE, CY, CZ, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL.

¹³² CZ, EE, EL, FI, IE, IT, LU.

¹³³ AT, DE, EL, IT, LT, LV, NL, UK.

¹³⁴ <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Privatpersoner/Bli-svensk-medborgare/Medborgarskap-for-vuxna/Testa-om-du-kan-bli-svensk-medborgare.html>.

at third-country nationals. In the Netherlands, the municipality advises the third-country national on the requirements and necessary documents for the application.

Member States generally do not actively encourage third-country nationals to consider applying for citizenship; at the most, Estonia, Finland and Italy reach out to specific eligible target groups. For example, Estonia contacts the parents of children under the age of 15 who have no Estonian citizenship, and in Italy, foreigners born on the territory must be informed about the possibility to exercise the right to obtain citizenship if they have legally resided without interruption until the age of majority. Germany poses an exception here, as non-nationals who meet (or almost meet) the requirements are encouraged, to consider applying for citizenship.

In general, Member States do not organise, support or finance integration measures to facilitate specifically the acquisition of citizenship for third-country nationals. However, in some Member States, citizenship applicants are granted access to integration measures available to immigrants in general, in particular, language courses.¹³⁵

Citizenship Application Support Service, New Communities Partnership – Ireland

In recognition of the need to promote a greater understanding of the application process among immigrants in Ireland, the Citizenship Application Support Service (CASS) was established by the NGO New Communities Partnership with funding from the Department of Justice and Equality. Its aim is to combat the high rate of incomplete and incorrect application forms and reduce delays in processing applications. The service aids migrants applying for naturalisation through nationwide phone lines and drop-in clinics. While State funding to the CASS ceased in 2017, CASS continues to provide assistance to applicants but introduced a fee for people availing of its service since October 2017.

Luxembourg has a Welcome and Integration Contract in place, of which the component relating to language and civic orientation courses may facilitate the acquisition of citizenship. One reason for this approach in some Member States may be that given the applicant's prolonged period of residence – which is a requirement in ordinary naturalisation – integration is assumed to have taken place and was supported in the years prior to filing an application for citizenship. Exceptions here are Estonia, Latvia and Luxembourg, which allow for the reimbursement of costs related to language training. Estonia reimburses up to 100 % of the costs related to language training needed to acquire citizenship, and in Luxembourg applicants can request reimbursement of up to € 750 of the costs for language courses. In Latvia, some local governments organise language courses on a voluntary basis to help prepare for the application process. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany provides an interactive list of questions in their online test centre, and some Federal States offer courses to prepare the applicant for the naturalisation test.

Active encouragement of naturalisation in Germany

On the national level, the German Government's National Plan of Action for Integration, which is currently being revised, includes measures to increase the numbers of naturalisation applicants by facilitating the application and accelerating the procedure. Moreover, more support is being provided during the application procedure. In recent years, many Federal States implement/ed measures such as promotional activities and information events aimed at encouraging non-nationals (including EU citizens and third-country nationals) to apply for German citizenship. One such example is the integration campaign #IchDuWirNRW¹³⁶ carried out in North Rhine-Westphalia, which presents examples of persons with a migration background who are "successfully integrated" and who applied for the German citizenship.

¹³⁵ CZ, EE, ES, FR, IT, LU, LV.



4.6. MEASURES ADOPTED IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 IN RELATION TO PROCEDURES FOR ON-GOING AND FUTURE CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some national authorities have had to suspend part or all of their normal activities with respect to procedures for citizenship applications. Aspects of the impact of this unprecedented situation on ongoing and future citizenship applications and procedures is set out in the Box below:

Measures taken in light of COVID-19 in relation to ongoing and future citizenship applications

Submission of applications and decision process

14 Member States¹³⁷ have not taken any specific measures in relation to citizenship applications or decisions and have therefore continued citizenship service. While these Member States have not taken specific measures, it does not mean that activities have continued as normal in all cases. In the Netherlands, for instance, municipalities have been able to adjust their activities as they see fit, so lodging applications has remained possible in some municipalities while in others, these have been put on hold, and naturalisation ceremonies have been continued by post in some municipalities and suspended in others during the lockdown period. In Austria, as per a measure dated from 5 April 2020, applicants were able to send their vows upon request in written form to the competent authority.

In Belgium, the National Security Council specifically stated that public administrations should continue to carry out their essential missions, including processing nationality applications.¹³⁸ Estonia, Portugal and Sweden pointed out that the continuation of services was possible due to fully digitised procedures. Some delays were nevertheless reported in a few Member States¹³⁹, in which courses or examinations linked to citizenship applications were put on hold (language classes, civics).¹⁴⁰ In Member States that reported applications were being processed without difficulty, this was mainly due to the fact that the application procedure in such countries is digitalised¹⁴¹.

Six Member States have taken specific measures to suspend all procedures until further notice, including cancellation of appointments and freezing of application procedures. These measures apply differently, even though decisions are no longer being taken at the time of development of this report in these Member States.¹⁴² Lithuania and Croatia nevertheless decided to process ongoing applications; however, the submission of new applications is not possible. Conversely, in Spain, decisions on applications are not being made, however, applications can still be made online.

Appeal proceedings

14 Member States¹⁴³ have decided to cancel hearings. Austria will only maintain those that are absolutely necessary (also online) and Belgium decided that, for those scheduled between 11 April and 3 June, hearings will be processed in written, without oral interventions unless a party expresses different views, in which case, the hearing may get postponed or take place online. In Finland, Greece and Italy, deadlines to submit appeals were extended. The Courts of Malta were closed.

In eight Member States, no specific measures were adopted, hence appeals may still be lodged, by post or online¹⁴⁴

136 <https://ichduwir.nrw/>

137 AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, HU, IE, MT, NL, PL, PT, SK, SE.

138 provided physical distancing and/or home working are ensured.

139 CZ, DE, EE, NL

140 Ibid.

141 EE, EL, PT, SK, SE

142 BG, CY, ES, FR, HR, IT, LT, LU, LV, SI

143 AT, BE, BG, ES, FI, FR, EL, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, SI

144 CZ, DE, EE, FI, LV, PT, SE, SK

5. DUAL CITIZENSHIP



5.1. DUAL CITIZENSHIP: POSSIBILITY AND RESTRICTIONS

In 17 Member States participating in the study, dual citizenship is possible, meaning there is no requirement to renounce a previous citizenship when acquiring or holding a citizenship of one of these Member States.¹⁴⁵ Allowing for dual citizenship acknowledges the demographic reality of all citizens who have links to more than one country and who want to avoid any undesirable effects losing a citizenship may have on their links (personal, family or other links) with their country of origin (Bauböck, et al., 2013).

For example, Sweden and Finland allow dual citizenship since the early 2000s after acknowledging that many immigrants remain connected to their home countries as well as the host country. Additionally, in Sweden there was an increase in the number of Swedish citizens working or studying abroad for whom the same applies. The government suggested that it could thus be difficult for people to renounce their citizenship and the accompanying links such as identity, traditions and cultural heritage. Additionally, encouraging circular migration was one of the reasons stated by Sweden. The United Kingdom explained their reasoning for allowing dual citizenship by acknowledging bonds with the home country as well as the host country, which however (according to the UK) does not prevent a person from establishing loyalty with the host country. Some Member States have had more recent legislative changes. Luxembourg for example has allowed for dual citizenship since 2009 and the Czech Republic introduced legislative changes in favour of dual citizenship in 2014. In Luxembourg, the legislative reform of 2008 aimed at fostering social cohesion and integration of those who wished to acquire Luxembourgish nationality. As regards dual citizenship in particular, the legislator considered that its introduction would allow migrants living in Luxembourg and wishing to acquire Luxembourgish nationality, as well as, Luxembourgish nationals residing abroad to acquire the nationality of their host country without having to renounce their Luxembourgish nationality.

These reasons are largely in line with academic literature on this topic, where proponents of dual citizenship argue that it creates opportunities for migrants to integrate politically and socially, as many feel connected to both the country of origin and the host country (see also section 6 on citizenship and integration in this report). Finally, allowing for dual citizenship removes a significant barrier to naturalisation and has positive effects on the integration of persons in their host country (Bauböck, et al., 2013).

The Member States allowing for dual citizenship did not cite specific requirements for dual nationals. However, in France the applicants need to inform the competent authority of the citizenship(s) they are retaining when acquiring French citizenship.

Finland, Latvia and Poland place restrictions on third-country nationals holding dual citizenship. In Finland individuals with dual citizenship cannot be appointed to certain public offices and military posts to avoid jeopardising state security, public security, foreign relations, or the safety of the military service of the Member State. Similarly, in Latvia and Poland certain positions relating to national security matters may require the renunciation of the citizenship of another State.



5.2. RENUNCIATION OF PREVIOUS CITIZENSHIPS

Nine of the Member States analysed require renunciation of a previous citizenship when acquiring the citizenship of their Member State, although there are several exemptions as shown further below.¹⁴⁶ In Cyprus, an application may be rejected, unless the applicant renounces any previous citizenship. The reasoning behind such strict citizenship acquisition provisions may relate to the value placed on citizenship by the authorities or may reflect the aim of the Member States to protect their own authority (see e.g. Faist et al. 2004). In fact, until recently, having only one citizenship was the norm in many countries and debates around dual citizenship are rather a new phenomenon (see e.g. Gallagher-Teske and Giesing, 2017). There are however several exemptions shown in the examples below.

- In Austria, the renunciation requirement can only be waived, if the action required in order to renounce the previous nationality cannot be (reasonably) taken; in such cases citizenship may nevertheless be granted. Examples falling under this exception include the case where the foreign State's legal system has no provision allowing an individual to dissolve the legal bond with the State. This is also the case in the Netherlands. Similarly, in Croatia renunciation is not necessary, if a country does not allow renunciation or sets requirements that cannot be complied with. This is also the case for Germany, which allows for retaining citizenship in cases when a third-country national cannot renounce the original citizenship, or for whom it would be a substantial problem.
- In Estonia, Germany and the Netherlands, persons granted international protection by the respective Member States or another Member State of the European Union who cannot renounce their previous citizenship are eligible for dual citizenship. In addition, in Estonia minors that acquire Estonian citizenship while holding the citizenship of another country can postpone the choice between two citizenships until their 21st birthday. In Germany, if *ius soli* children acquire two or more citizenships at birth, they are required to choose between the German and the other citizenship(s) after their twenty-first birthday (Optionspflicht). Since 2014, those *ius soli* children may retain their dual citizenship permanently, if by their twenty-first birthday, they have either lived eight

¹⁴⁵ BE, CZ, CY, EL, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, SK (with exceptions), UK.

¹⁴⁶ AT, BG, DE, EE, ES, HR, LV, LT, NL.

years in Germany, attended a German school for six years, or graduated from a German school or training program. EU and Swiss citizens, persons who cannot renounce citizenship, or for whom it would be a substantial problem may, also obtain dual citizenship.

- In Latvia, citizens of specific countries do not need to renounce their citizenship to become Latvian citizens. These include EU, NATO, EFTA Member State, Australia, Brazil and New Zealand. The list is similar in Bulgaria, where renunciation is not required for individuals holding citizenship of an EU Member State, of a European Economic Area Member State or the Confederation of Switzerland, or of a Member State Bulgaria has bilateral agreements with. Similarly, in Germany EU and Swiss citizens do not need to renounce their citizenship.
- In Lithuania persons must renounce their other citizenship in order to acquire citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania. Dual citizenship is prohibited by the Constitution with few rare exceptions indicated by the law (e.g., if a person acquired another citizenship by birth, has a refugee status, was exiled or left from the occupied territory of Lithuania before 11 March 1990, has acquired Lithuania citizenship by way of exception and other cases indicated by the law).
- In the Netherlands, further exemptions include spouses, i.e. those that acquired the citizenship of a Member State by

marrying a citizen of this state, and in Germany exemptions include older persons or, if renunciation would lead to disadvantages of a financial or property-related nature.

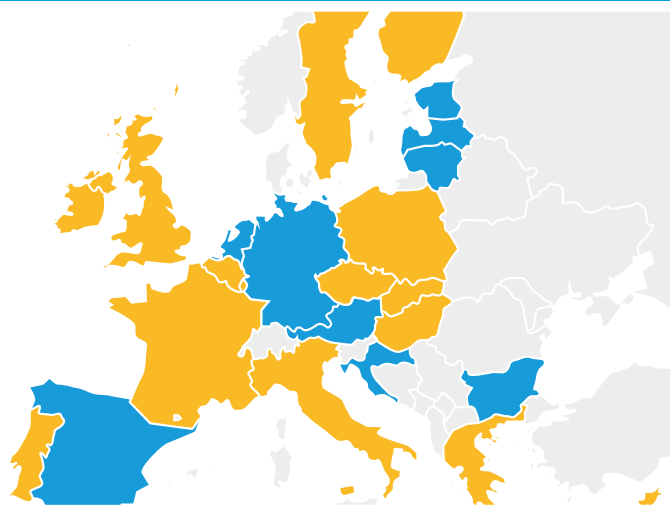
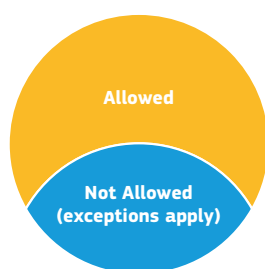
- In Spain, the Spanish Constitution establishes the right for Latin-American, Andorra, Philippines and Equatorial Guinea citizens and people with Sephardic origin to maintain their previous citizenships together with the Spanish nationality.



5.3. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DUAL CITIZENSHIP FOR THE CITIZENS AND THE MEMBER STATES

Overall, allowing for dual citizenship brings benefits for those individuals acquiring such citizenship, as there is no need to renounce the first nationality, and they retain absolute rights of entry and residence in the first state of nationality. Thus, certain restrictions can be avoided, e.g. on property ownership and commercial activities (for more information, see Spiro, 2019).

MEMBER STATES' APPROACHES TO DUAL CITIZENSHIP



Source: EMN NCPs' reports

At national level, some Member States reported a positive view on dual citizenship, and its potential role in encouraging more persons to apply for citizenship (e.g. in Malta and Luxembourg). Further, dual citizenship could allow large diaspora groups abroad to stay connected to their home country. For example, Hungary noted that dual citizenship allows large Hungarian communities living abroad to acquire Hungarian citizenship and thus participate in the political decision-making in Hungary. Some Member States that do not permit dual citizenship provide exceptions for certain persons. In the Netherlands and Germany, exceptions to the renunciation requirement (as set out in Section 5.2) mean that in practice, a number of persons may retain their other nationality when they acquire the new citizenship.

However, Member States allowing dual citizenship have identified some challenges. For example, in Finland national security issues have become a topic of discussion and foreign attempts

to influence Finnish dual citizens have been debated. In Greece concerns raised were of a more practical nature regarding having two different passports in force that could enable the holders to evade authority checks. Sweden has identified issues for dual nationals when for example consular assistance is needed in the other country of citizenship, as the opportunities for a state to act is dependent on the extent to which the other state allows an intervention. To raise awareness of potential implications of having dual citizenship the Swedish Migration Agency provides some information on its website¹⁴⁷ and attaches such information to its decisions to issue citizenship to an applicant. Additionally, military service has been cited as a potential issue for persons holding dual citizenship, although in Sweden a person holding dual citizenship can be exempt from military service, if the person has completed military service in the second country in which they are a citizen.

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Privatpersoner/Bli-svensk-medborgare/Vad-innebar-svenskt-medborgarskap.html>

6. CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION

Integration theories describe the acquisition of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities associated with it as a crucial step in the integration in the host country of a third-country national (e.g. Fick, 2016; Alba & Foner, 2015; Bevelander, 2011). There is suggestive evidence that providing access to full citizenship can improve health and educational attainment for youth and enhance opportunities for labour market integration¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, naturalised immigrants in general tend to have better integration outcomes than non-nationals (Bloemraad, 2017).

However, citizenship acquisition and integration are seen differently in different Member States, depending on their approaches to citizenship. This section explores the diverging views on the role of citizenship in immigrant integration across the Member States analysed in this study.

In the majority of Member States, citizenship is viewed as linked to national integration policy.¹⁴⁹ In some Member States citizenship is not part of integration policies,¹⁵⁰ because either there is no integration policy at the national level (in Belgium) or the policies address third-country nationals up to the point of acquiring citizenship. An exception is Greece, which in general does not address citizenship in its integration policy, but does focus on people whose grandparents were migrants, some of whom might hold Greek citizenship.

Some of the Member States¹⁵¹ reported on citizenship as the 'culmination' of the integration process, meaning that immigrants are required to fulfil integration criteria laid out by the Member States before becoming citizens. Other Member States reported a view on citizenship as a key measure to facilitate the integration of migrants into the host society.¹⁵² In other Member States, the link between citizenship and integration is unclear or the subject of ongoing controversial debate, as in Luxembourg, Greece, the Netherlands and Malta. In Greece, the importance of integration measures differs by the type of citizenship, although as mentioned above citizenship is not part of the integration policy. However, granting citizenship to the second generation is seen as an important integration tool, whereas the economic, social and political integration of the applicant is a precondition for acquiring citizenship through ordinary naturalisation.

In Italy, the path to becoming a citizen is supported by different kinds of integration measures. From the beginning, migrants are involved in language and civic knowledge courses. They can then enjoy the opportunities provided at local level in different areas: employment, education, social inclusion. In recent years, efforts have been made in developing a mutual approach, whereby Italian citizens are involved as well.

Eight Member States (Czech Republic, Finland, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and to a limited extent in Sweden) reported that specific support is made available for new citizens. Such support ranges from information provision to specific support measures for new citizens, although most of the measures mentioned below are not solely targeting new citizens but often target citizens with a migration background in general:

- In Estonia and Ireland, support is limited to a booklet providing information on the rights and obligations of new citizens.
- In Luxembourg, in addition to an information booklet, the notification of the positive decision on the naturalisation application contains a notice that the acquisition of Luxembourgish nationality entails the obligation to vote in all elections in Luxembourg.
- In Finland, new citizens in certain cities or municipalities receive perks such as tickets for museums or other cultural events free of charge.
- In the Netherlands new citizens have the possibility to participate in language courses at local level and certain initiatives that support labour market integration of the new citizens. Such an initiative is the 'Further Integration in the Labour Market' programme, launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Employment and Social affairs. It aims at improving the position of Dutch nationals with a migration background in the Dutch labour market (it is however, not only for new citizens).
- In the Czech Republic, regional integration centres have been operating since 2009 and they offer legal and social advice, language courses and cultural activities. This support is provided before acquisition of the citizenship as a part of targeted training for exams to acquire the citizenship.
- Sweden offers support to enhance the political participation of new citizens, through e.g. interaction with voters during election periods, via spokespeople (so called democracy ambassadors) and several mobilisation campaigns and better involvement of ethnic minority associations are seen as having some positive effects
- Portugal highlighted a programme aimed at a better integration of immigrants and their descendants, including those who obtained Portuguese nationality, into society. This is part of the strategic Plan for Migration (2015-2020) and includes different areas such as: digital inclusion and fighting social and economic exclusion, promoting the values of Portuguese citizenship, supporting migrant entrepreneurship and empowering the civic and political participation of immigrant descendants in the country.

148 Such statement is strongly evidenced in recent German publications for instance: Behagel, et al., 2018, Gathmann & Keller 2014; Worbs 2014; Kaya & Kayaoğlu 2012

149 AT, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, LV, PL, PT, SE, SK, UK.

150 BE, CY, EL, HR, MT, NL, LT.

151 AT, BE, CZ, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, SK.

152 FI, IE, LV, PT.

In eight Member States¹⁵³ naturalisation is seen to positively contribute to labour market integration, mainly because there is equal access to the labour market with other citizens (including access to certain professions that are reserved for citizens). Third-country nationals are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed. However, in most Member States acquiring citizenship is a step taken after spending several years in the country. In general, a longer residence in a country may contribute positively to employment outcomes (see e.g. Pereira et al., 2015, Esser, 2004). It is thus important to consider that the length of time spent in the Member States is also a factor that may affect employment outcomes.

Further, citizenship is no guarantee against discrimination in the labour market, as data across the EU shows (see FRA, 2019 for results of the EU minorities and discrimination survey). For example, discrimination might occur due to religious dress or names that are not identified as native (see Weichselbaumer,

2019 for a study on Austria). Other studies show that ethnic discrimination occurs for specific groups regardless of their nationality, such as a recent study in Ireland on labour market integration, which identifies discrimination on the basis of ethnicity as an important factor for black individuals, regardless of nationality (McGinnity et al, 2018).

Although every citizen in an EU Member States is also a citizen of the European Union, the analysed Member States provided little information that would suggest a connection between citizenship in the Member States and intra-EU mobility. Greece and Luxembourg mentioned that one of the arguments for acquiring citizenship related to the facilitation of intra-EU Mobility, however, Member States such as Austria, Germany and the Netherlands emphasised that naturalisation is generally associated with long-term settlement in the respective Member State and not a planned move to another EU Member State.

¹⁵³ BE, CY, DE, FI, IE, PL, SE, SK.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Citizenship is the particular legal bond between an individual and their State.^[1] This study focusses on the acquisition of citizenship through ordinary naturalisation. The acquisition of citizenship at birth is possible by place of birth, *ius soli*, or by the citizenship of one or both parents, *ius sanguinis* regardless of place of birth. No EU Member State currently grants automatic and unconditional citizenship to children born to non-nationals on their territories; however, all offer the possibility for third-country nationals to acquire citizenship of their jurisdictions through ordinary naturalisation. Awarding national citizenship remains the competence of each Member State, and thus the conditions and requirements under which citizenship can be conferred vary significantly from country to country. With the establishment of EU citizenship and freedom of movement, the decision of one Member State to grant citizenship to a third-country national directly grants fundamental citizens' rights to that individual across the EU, thus national legislation in this area must be exercised with due regard to EU law.

Policies on the acquisition of citizenship have evolved over the past five years, with Member States reporting trends that have had the impact of making access to citizenship either more liberal or more restrictive. Trends in the numbers of individuals granted citizenship of an EU-28 Member States have shown an overall decline in period of time covered by the study.

Political considerations, policy priorities, migration flows procedures and requirements all shape policies on the acquisition of citizenship, and these evolve over time. Sixteen Member States implemented major policy changes in the past five years, which have had the impact of making access to citizenship either more liberal or more restrictive. More liberal approaches have aimed at better integrating new migrants and adapting to wider societal change but were in some cases motivated by historical considerations and special ties with the country. More restrictive measures have been introduced in some cases, including to counter the risks of terrorism and to protect state security, but also to ensure that minimum standards in integration had been achieved as a condition of granting citizenship.

The criteria for granting citizenship and the procedures in place are broadly similar across the Member States but the specific conditions and requirements that apply vary considerably, depending on whether more liberal or restrictive policies are in place. Processing times, the costs to applicants and available support vary significantly.

Eligibility for citizenship generally requires a proven minimum period of legal residence of five years in most Member States, although this can vary from as little as two years to up to ten years. Whilst some temporary residence statuses may also 'count' towards the required period, the minimum residence period is usually in the form of permanent and physical residence on the territory.

Applications and supporting documents are submitted in person, by post or on-line, either to the local or municipal authority, which undertakes an initial review and consults with other relevant bodies, before passing to the decision-making bodies, in some Member States, or to the national ministry responsible for citizenship matters in others. Whilst a growing trend towards digitisation of the application process was observed to improve the accessibility and efficiency of the process, time periods for processing submitted applications varied widely, from six to 48 months. Costs related to applications are not standardised and also vary widely, ranging from no fees at all to € 1 500 depending on the Member State; though overall costs can be much higher (up to € 2 000) in some countries, where fees for language courses and tests and citizenship ceremonies, or additional costs relating to dual citizenship applications, must also be paid.

A recognised challenge has been the increasing mobility of people, which can lead to difficulties for applicants to keep to the rules for minimum periods of legal residence. Whilst all Member States allow for short absences of up to three months for short-term holidays, family visits, etc. some have introduced more flexible approaches, including the possibility to interrupt the period of minimum residence in specific cases for limited periods of time (e.g. between 6 and 18 months, depending on the duration of the minimum residence period in place) and introduced interruptions for specific groups, such as cross border workers, and in cases of *force majeure*.

Other conditions include knowledge of the host country's language and evidence of good conduct and public order. If language requirements are too high or too strict, this might carry the risk of restricting access to citizenship. Thus, some Member States have put exemptions in place to counteract such risks, for example, for people with severe health impairments and/or disabilities as well as for elderly people. A citizenship test and / or the legal or symbolic commitment to certain values in the form of an oath of allegiance was a requirement in more than half of the Member States.

For many aspiring citizens, naturalisation can be a lengthy and costly process, with limited available support, and a positive outcome is in general not guaranteed, even where all conditions have been met.

The final decision on the application is usually taken at a high level of government and in all Member States, the decision for granting citizenship is at least partly based on discretion i.e. a negative decision can still be issued, even if all legal requirements are fulfilled (with the exception of Germany). However, the majority of Member States apply conditional discretion, and refusal will often have to be duly justified. Where available, indications of negative decision rates suggest rates are at least in some countries, relatively low. In some cases, the decision is made without the possibility of appeal.

The majority of Member States now allow for dual citizenship, which may acknowledge the demographic reality that many migrants have ties to more than one country and others in practice apply exemptions where the renunciation of a previous citizenship cannot reasonably take place. However, dual citizenship brings both benefits and challenges.

For individuals there are benefits to acquiring further citizenships whilst retaining their previous citizenship(s). For example, retention of rights of entry and residence, avoidance of restrictions on property ownership etc in countries where citizenship is held. Member States also identified wider benefits, such as encouraging more people to apply for citizenship in their Member State (with the added benefits to integration as demonstrated below), allowing large diaspora groups abroad to stay connected to their home country, and to support circular migration. Limits to the extension of dual citizenship rights may result from challenges identified by some Member States, such as public concerns about national security issues resulting from 'dual allegiance'.

Citizenship is seen by Member States as either the culmination of the integration process or as facilitating

the integration process. However, in most Member States, third-country nationals are not actively encouraged to apply for citizenship, and support is limited.

Integration theories describe the acquisition of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities associated with it as a crucial step in the integration process, with naturalised third-country nationals enjoying better integration outcomes than non-nationals. However, approaches to citizenship acquisition and integration are viewed differently across the Member States. Whilst the majority link citizenship to national integration policies, others do not, due in part to the fact that, in some cases, the focus of integration policies is on third-country nationals before they have acquired citizenship. Indeed, some Member States reported on citizenship as the end point of the integration process, once integration criteria have been fulfilled. Other Member States, to the contrary, reported that citizenship is viewed as a key measure to facilitate the integration of migrants into the host society. Member States reported they generally do not actively encourage third-country nationals to consider applying for citizenship. Support provided to third-country nationals prior to and during the application process was found in most cases to be limited to information provided via online channels.

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ANNEX 1- PRINCIPLE FOLLOWED FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP BY BIRTH IN MEMBER STATES

Member State	Ius sanguinis	Ius soli				Other
		Unconditional	Conditional	Automatic double	Conditional double	
AT	At least 1 parent is Austrian					
BE	Provided the child is born in Belgium (if the child is born outside Belgium, the Belgian parent should have been born in Belgium)		10 years residence period for parents - If child is born in Belgium and/or stateless otherwise		5 years residence period for parents	
BG	At least 1 parent is Bulgarian		If stateless otherwise			
CY	At least 1 parent (biological or adoptive) is Cypriot at the time of birth		if stateless otherwise and if parents stateless and at least one is authorised to reside in the country > 90 days			
CZ	- At least 1 parent is Czech at the time of birth - If child of foreign citizenship is adopted by adoptive parents and at least one of them is Czech national		if stateless otherwise and if parents stateless and at least one is authorised to reside in the country > 90 days			
DE	At least 1 parent is German at the time of birth		8 years residence period for parents - If stateless otherwise		if by 21st birthday has lived eight years in Germany or has attended a German school for six years or graduated in Germany.	
EE	at least one parent (biological or adoptive) holds Estonian citizenship at the time of the birth of the child		citizenship is granted to a child born in Estonia from the moment of birth if child parents are stateless persons and have legally resided in Estonia for at least five years by the moment of the child's birth.			
EL	At least 1 parent is Greek at the time of the child's birth.		- If stateless otherwise - if does not acquire any other foreign nationality		If 1 of the parents born and has reside in EL since then	
ES	Children born to Spanish father or mother		1-year residence period - if stateless otherwise	Children born in Spain to father or mother also born in Spain		

Member State	Ius sanguinis	Ius soli				Other
		Unconditional	Conditional	Automatic double	Conditional double	
FI	If at least 1 parent (biological or adoptive) is Finnish		- If stateless otherwise - If both parents have refugee status in Finland and that the child does not acquire either parent's citizenship except through registration of the child's birth with the authority of the parent's State of nationality, or through another procedure requiring the assistance of the authorities of this State. - If the protection referred to above was given to only one of the parents, it is also required that the child does not acquire the other parent's - citizenship by birth nor has even a secondary right through birth to acquire it			
FR	If at least 1 parent is French		- Residence for 5 years since the age of 11 (automatic acquisition) - On request by the parents when the child turns 13 or by the child at the age of 16 in the case of continuous residency since the age of 11 (early acquisition by declaration)	If at least 1 of the parents was born in France		
HR	- If at least 1 parent is Croatian - If child of foreign citizenship adopted by Croatian parents		- If born to unknown parents - if parents are of unknown citizenship, - if parents are stateless - Citizenship will cease at 14th birthday of child if foreign citizenship of parents confirmed			
HU	If at least 1 parent is Hungarian		- If born to unknown parents - If stateless otherwise			

Member State	Ius sanguinis	Ius soli				Other
		Unconditional	Conditional	Automatic double	Conditional double	
IE	- If at least 1 parent is an Irish citizen - If born outside of Ireland to parent also born abroad to an Irish citizen, provided the birth of the parent through whom citizenship is derived was registered on the Foreign Births Register.		If the child is born to a non-Irish citizen legally resident in Ireland for 3 out of 4 years prior to birth.			
IT	If at least 1 parent (biological/adoptive) is Italian		- If the parents are unknown or stateless or cannot transmit their nationality to the child according to the law of the State they are citizens - By declaration, if the foreigner is born in Italy, has legally resided there without interruption until the age of majority			
LT	If at least 1 parent (biological/adoptive) is Lithuanian		- If found on the LT territory to unknown parents - If born to stateless parents permanently residing in Lithuania			
LU	If at least 1 parent (biological/adoptive) is or obtains Luxembourgish citizenship	In 2020, anyone born in LU before 19 April 1942	- Because parents are stateless - If born to unknown parents - If child cannot obtain the nationality of its foreign parent(s)	If child born in LU and one of the parents (biological/adoptive) was born in LU		- At the age of 18 if born in Luxembourg with non-Luxembourgish (biological/adoptive) parents and fulfilling the double-residence criteria: - residence of at least 5 years immediately preceding their majority; - one of the biological/adoptive parents had a legal residence in Luxembourg of at least 12 months immediately preceding their birth.
LV	- If at least 1 parent is Latvian - anyone who was Latvian on 17 June 1940 and any descent who fled LV (USSR/German occupation)		- If born to unknown parents - If born in LV after 21/08/91 and parents are stateless + permanently living in LV - If stateless otherwise + living in LV			A person who has started basic/secondary educ. before 2013 in Latvian language can register for 2 years after completion of education

Member State	Ius sanguinis	Ius soli				Other
		Unconditional	Conditional	Automatic double	Conditional double	
MT	■ If at least 1 parent is/was Maltese	■ Persons born between 21/9/1964 and 31/7/1989 (unless diplomatic immunity for father)	■ Since 1 August 1989, if at least 1 parent is/was Maltese			
NL	■ If at least 1 parent is Dutch		■ If found in the territory of the NL (unless becomes apparent within 5 yr that s/he possesses a foreign nationality)		■ If born to at least 1 parent living in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or Saint Martin at time of birth and who was born to a father or mother who himself or herself had his or her principal place of residence in one of those countries at the time of his or her birth, provided that the child has his or her principal place of residence in the Netherlands, Aruba, Curacao or Saint Martin at the time of his or her birth.	
PL	■ If at least 1 parent is Polish		■ If stateless otherwise			
PT	■ If at least 1 parent is Portuguese		■ If parent was born in PT ■ If foreign parent legally residing in PT for at least 2 y. prior to birth			
SE	■ If at least 1 parent is Swedish		■ If stateless otherwise			
SK	■ If at least 1 parent is Slovak		■ If born in SK and stateless otherwise; ■ If born in SK to unknown or stateless parents, ■ If born in SK and cannot obtain citizenship of either foreign parent			
UK	■ If at least 1 parent is British		■ If either parent is a British citizen, ■ If parent is settled in the UK or ■ If parent is a member of the armed forces			

Source: EMN NCPS' reports

ANNEX 2 – NUMBER OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS GRANTED CITIZENSHIP BETWEEN 2014-2018 BY MODES OF ACQUISITION (NATIONAL STATISTICS)

The modes of acquiring citizenship are taken from the Global Database on Modes of Acquisition of Citizenship (<http://globalcit.eu/acquisition-citizenship/>). Only the modes of acquisition applicable in the given Member State are shown.

MS	Ground of acquiring citizenship	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
		total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
AT	Total	6 466	3 081	3 385	7 146	3 349	3 797	7 285	3 433	3 852	7 657	3 750	3 907	7 440	3 550	3 890
	Ordinary naturalisation	1 158	518	640	1 304	672	632	1 262	649	613	1 192	667	525	1 160	600	560
	Spousal transfer	1 006	306	700	1 069	299	770	993	283	710	1 061	357	704	950	310	640
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Special achievements	36	28	8	16	11	5	22	15	7	12	6	6	7	5	2
	Birth in country (2nd generation)	675	306	369	673	302	371	692	313	379	724	313	411	838	359	479
	Birth in country (3rd generation)															
	Adoption	63	30	33	58	21	37	40	23	17	57	31	26	37	18	19
	Citizenship of a specific country	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Refugees	599	378	221	556	322	234	675	429	246	733	448	285	659	405	254
	Other	2 928	1 515	1 413	3 469	1 721	1 748	3 601	1 721	1 880	3 878	1 928	1 950	3 788	1 852	1 936
BG ¹⁵⁴	Total	5 407	3 211	2 196	9 799	5 857	3 942	12 853	7 856	4 997	4 724	2 884	1 840	8 335	4 959	3 376
	Ordinary naturalisation	365	150	215	533	207	326	767	244	523	358	162	196	363	158	205
	Spousal transfer	5	5	0	6	5	1	393	119	274	186	70	116	233	71	162
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	20	11	9	35	15	20	30	15	15	15	10	5	15	8	7
	Special achievements and Public service	9	7	2	7	5	2	13	12	1	10	7	3	15	11	4
	Financial assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	13	12	1	27	21	6
	Adoption	A person who is not a Bulgarian citizen may acquire Bulgarian citizenship under Article 15, para 1, item 2 of the Bulgarian Citizenship Act if they were adopted by a Bulgarian citizen under the terms of full adoption. The Bulgarian Citizenship Directorate does not keep statistics as per this criterion.														
	Refugess	9	8	1	14	10	4	11	8	3	11	9	2	11	9	2
	Other - humanitarian status	15	12	3	44	35	9	43	30	13	25	19	6	34	27	7
	Other - persons of Bulgarian origin	5 033	3 054	1 979	9 259	5 645	3 614	12 073	7 600	4 473	4 356	2 715	1 641	7 957	4 790	3 167
CY	Total	804	314	490	1 531	583	948	1 795	571	1 224	2 358	772	1 586	1 861	754	1 107
	Ordinary naturalisation	356	125	231	757	255	502	507	188	319	889	335	554	1 077	461	616

¹⁵⁴ Please note that the number of some of the persons is indicated in more than one category, for example, there are persons who have been granted the status of a refugee or humanitarian status who do not have citizenship and, therefore, the aggregation of all grounds will not give the total number of third-country nationals who acquired Bulgarian citizenship given in column one..

MS	Ground of acquiring citizenship	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
		total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
	Spousal transfer	74	12	62	194	32	162	713	91	622	947	158	789	305	61	244
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	0			0			0			0			0		
	Cultural affinity	0			0			0			0			0		
	Special achievements	0			0			0			0			1	1	0
	Public service	0			0			0			0			0		
	Financial assets	57	29	28	144	72	72	157	79	78	129	64	65	122	62	60
	Birth in country (2nd generation)	0			0			0			0			0		
	Birth in country (3rd generation)	0			0			0			0			0		
	Adoption	0			0			0			0			0		
	Citizenship of a specific country	0			0			0			0			0		
	Refugees	0			0			0			0			0		
	Other	317	148	169	436	224	212	418	213	205	393	215	178	356	169	187
DE	Total	26 895	10 777	16 118	27 394	10 970	16 424	32 050	13 069	18 981	38 306	16 113	22 193	35 975	15 260	20 730
	Ordinary naturalisation	23 807	9 609	14 198	24 306	9 756	14 550	28 440	11 621	16 819	34 237	14 431	19 806	31 665	13 510	18 170
	Spousal transfer	1 013	166	847	870	162	708	981	209	772	1 222	355	867	1 235	345	900
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	6	5	1	5	4	1	4	1	3	7	5	2	5	0	0
	Adoption	129	74	55	115	68	47	114	59	55	106	51	55	0	0	0
	Citizenship of a specific country	39	12	27	26	10	16	24	6	18	20	6	14	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Other	1 901	911	990	2 072	970	1 102	2 487	1 173	1 314	2 714	1 265	1 449	3 070	1 405	1 660
EE	Total															
	Ordinary naturalisation	1 100	457	643	585	218	367	667	278	389	575	260	315	497	220	277
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	433	231	202	273	131	142	975	539	436	175	89	86	170	88	82
	Adoption	5	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	N/A
	Refugees	1	1					3	3					1	1	
	Other	77	40	37	40	24	16	125	63	62	123	60	63	86	42	44
EL	Total	20 134	11 049	9 085	12 574	7 229	5 345	32 713	17 088	15 625	33 870	17 326	16 544	27 636	14 072	13 564
	Ordinary naturalisation	1 879	807	1 072	1 344	568	776	3 357	1 451	1 906	3 176	1 435	1 741	2 336	1 138	1 198
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	6	5	1	1	0	1	11	6	5	7	5	2	5	2	3
	Cultural affinity	16 061	8 400	7 661	8 518	4 489	4 029	7 849	4 226	3 623	3 901	2 103	1 798	3 066	1 655	1 411

MS	Ground of acquiring citizenship	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
		total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
	Special achievements	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0
	Public service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Birth in country (3rd generation)	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Adoption	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Attendance of Greek school in Greece	0	0	0	259	151	108	19 247	9 499	9 748	25 285	12 581	12 704	21 336	10 619	10 717
	Minor children of naturalised persons	1 739	1 587	152	1 953	1 756	197	1 814	1 663	151	1 072	973	99	501	448	53
	Paternity acknowledgement	430	245	185	486	262	224	428	240	188	420	228	192	380	204	176
	Other	10	0	10	10	2	8	6	2	4	8	1	7	6	0	6
ES	Total	93 720	43 669	50 034	82 484	35 312	42 683	95 692	42 680	51 079	29 579	12 349	13 575	93 183	41 885	50 616
	Ordinary naturalisation	84 834	40 454	44 380	71 676	33 147	38 529	85 822	39 800	46 022	23 707	11 488	12 219	84 253	39 083	45 170
	Spousal transfer	7 870	2 634	5 236	5 777	1 852	3 925	7 353	2 535	4 818	1 900	681	1 219	7 740	2 521	5 219
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	57	31	26	26	17	9	44	27	17	18	11	7	35	22	13
	Special achievements	17			4 489			1 933			3 655			682		
	Other	942	550	392	516	296	220	540	318	222	299	169	130	473	259	214
FI	Total	7 336	3 421	3 915	6 925	3 355	3 570	8 183	3 923	4 260	10 436	5 020	5 416	7 823	3 657	4 166
	Ordinary naturalisation	5 833	not available	not available	5 380	not available	not available	6 328	not available	not available	8 700	not available	not available	6 076	not available	not available
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	193	97	96	197	106	91	244	133	111	363	190	173	274	134	140
	Adoption	3	not available	not available	4	not available	not available	4	not available	not available	7	not available	not available	13	not available	not available
	Citizenship of a specific country	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Refugees	755	not available	not available	597	not available	not available	995	not available	not available	1 404	not available	not available	1 263	not available	not available
FR	Total	96 985	47 828	49 157	104 477	50 917	53 560	110 422	54 066	56 356	104 154	51 088	53 066	97 971	47 347	50 624
	Ordinary naturalisation	50 746	26 030	24 716	54 187	27 639	26 548	60 262	30 550	29 712	57 467	29 180	28 287	47 275	23 746	23 529
	Spousal transfer	18 050	7 376	10 674		9 127	13 819	18 992	7 546	11 446	15 364	6 042	9 322	17 899	6 977	10 922
	Stateless or unclear citizenship					6	4	31	15	16	117	52	65	19	13	6
	Other (other and early acquisitions by declaration between the age of 13 and 18)	23 634	12 036	11 598	22 967	11 845	11 122	26 233	13 447	12 786	26 434	13 342	13 092	28 441	14 359	14 082
HR	Total	2 066	884	1 182	3 433	1 646	1 787	3 489	1 727	1 762	1 848	867	981	3 263	1 533	1 730

MS	Ground of acquiring citizenship	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
		total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
	Ordinary naturalisation	128	79	49	170	100	70	207	146	61	0			207	151	56
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	476	148	328	315	77	238	377	102	275	197	35	162	243	42	201
	Other	1 424	626	798	2 883	1 432	1 451	2 886	1 468	1 418	1 630	815	815	2 785	1 325	1 460
HU	Total	57 782	N/A	N/A	51 494	N/A	N/A	34 278	N/A	N/A	25 802	N/A	N/A	18 031	N/A	N/A
	Ordinary naturalisation	104	58	46	105	54	51	133	63	70	126	65	61	168	84	83
	Spousal transfer	54	17	37	45	18	27	40	17	23	47	29	18	39	22	17
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	32	N/A	N/A	23	N/A	N/A	17	N/A	N/A	16	N/A	N/A	30	N/A	N/A
	Adoption	4	1	3	0	0	0	16	7	9	10	4	6	7	2	5
	Refugees	7	4	3	17	11	6	65	38	27	18	12	6	11	7	4
IE	Total	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i	n/i
	Ordinary naturalisation	9 229	4 564	4 665	5 571	3 085	2 486	3 142	1 706	1 436	2 333	1 276	1 057	2 329	1 264	1 065
	Spousal transfer	3 026	1 256	1 770	2 467	1 086	1 381	1 827	778	1 049	1 148	480	668	1 103	427	676
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	2	n/i	n/i	6	n/i	n/i	0	n/i	n/i	0	n/i	n/i	0	n/i	n/i
	Cultural affinity ¹⁵⁵	5 336	2 710	2 626	2 057	1 027	1 030	1 459	730	729	869	448	421	822	444	378
	Refugees	546	307	239	306	164	142	255	157	98	115	70	45	50	29	21
IT	Total	120 455	62 837	57 618	158 885	81 907	76 978	184 626	96 676	87 950	135 804	67 959	67 845	103 478	47 983	55 495
	Ordinary naturalisation	56 759	35 527	21 232	85 468	48 684	36 784	91 268	53 366	37 828	37 828	22 138	15 690	35 609	20 542	15 067
	Spousal transfer	20 646	4 587	16 059	20 176	4 428	15 748	26 086	5 372	20 714	19 186	3 468	15 718	21 768	3 326	18 442
	Financial assets	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	50 926	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
LT	Total	1 656			1 649			1 949			3 040			2 405		
	Ordinary naturalisation	118			127			140			135			146		
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	61			50			33			31			50		
	Reinstatement	1 079			1 197			1 393			2 378			1 877		
	Other	398			275			383			496			332		
LU	Total	664	n/i	n/i	773	n/i	n/i	989	n/i	n/i	2086	n/i	n/i	3935	n/i	n/i
	Ordinary naturalisation	574	n/i	n/i	651	n/i	n/i	654	n/i	n/i	534	n/i	n/i	327	n/i	n/i
	Spousal transfer	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	23	n/i	n/i	103	n/i	n/i
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	n/i	n/i	30	n/i	n/i

¹⁵⁵ Data for the acquisition of citizenship on the basis of 'Irish descent or associations' are only available for minor applicants. Adult applicants based on 'Irish descent or associations' are included in data reported in the ordinary naturalisation row.

MS	Ground of acquiring citizenship	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
		total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
	Special achievements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other: Options¹⁵⁶	1	n/i	n/i	1	n/i	n/i	0	n/i	n/i	817	n/i	n/i	1 946	n/i	n/i
	Other: Reclamations	89	n/i	n/i	120	n/i	n/i	334	n/i	n/i	703	n/i	n/i	1 529	n/i	n/i
LV	Total	2 328	1 149	1 164	2 116	1 057	1 059	1 654	845	809	1 489	749	740	1 399	710	689
	Ordinary naturalisation	77	28	49	85	36	49	100	48	52	93	46	47	104	46	58
	Special achievements	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Other	2 222	1 111	1 096	2 021	1 016	1 005	1 549	794	755	1 389	701	688	1 290	661	629
NL	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Adoption	205	116	89	148	72	76	154	83	71	133	73	60	124	61	63
PL	Total															
	Ordinary naturalisation	4 515	2 047	2 468	4 052	1 868	2 184	4 126	2 005	2 121	4 296	2 060	2 236	5 226	2 504	2 722
	Other	412	194	218	383	186	197	451	201	250	325	150	175	410	213	197
PT	Total	21 663	10 093	11 570	21 840	10 528	11 312	26 194	12 351	13 843	18 838	8 394	10 444	23 576	13 034	10 542
	Ordinary naturalisation	12 556	6 364	6 192	14 225	7 120	7 105	16 605	8 226	8 379	11 327	5 339	5 987	14 316	6 604	7 712
	Spouse of an EU citizen	3 671	863	2 808	2 159	540	1 619	3 493	955	2 538	3 405	898	2 507	3 756	1 059	2 697
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	2	1	1	2	0	2	6	3	3	3	1	2	5	3	2
	Cultural affinity	82	43	39	64	32	32	58	32	26	87	41	46	117	67	50
	Birth in country (2nd generation)	1 218	625	593	2 009	1 039	970	1 543	784	759	1 198	630	568	1 701	882	819
	Adoption	32	13	19	16	8	8	18	9	9	17	8	9	18	9	9
SE	Total	23 696	10 144	13 552	29 245	13 109	16 136	39 457	18 672	20 785	47 805	23 411	24 394	44 403	22 783	21 620
	Ordinary naturalisation	20 810	8 635	12 175	22 813	9 690	13 123	22 991	10 024	12 967	28 060	12 591	15 469	26 364	12 760	13 604
	Stateless or unclear citizenship	1 062	573	489	2 417	1 329	1 088	3 624	1 920	1 704	6 012	3 431	2 581	5 686	3 309	2 377
	Other	1 824	936	888	4 015	2 090	1 925	12 842	6 728	6 114	13 733	7 389	6 344	12 353	6 714	5 639
SK	Total	305	147	158	316	167	149	316	165	151	479	260	219	381	189	192
UK	Total	125 754	60 858	64 857	118 109	57 499	60 555	149 421	72 294	77 084	123 213	59 678	63 529	157 023	75 445	81566
	Ordinary naturalisation	62 511	32 886	29 614	60 755	32 408	28 331	77 587	40 982	36 594	68 738	35 584	33 151	85 711	43 632	42077
	Spousal transfer	26 185	9 041	17 141	24 427	8 368	16 048	26 760	8 445	18 311	18 577	5 832	12 745	23 564	7 774	15789

Source: EMN NCPs' reports

¹⁵⁶ Excluding options for spousal transfer and stateless or unclear citizenship.



Keeping in touch with the EMN

EMN website www.ec.europa.eu/emn

EMN LinkedIn page www.linkedin.com/company/european-migration-network/

EMN Twitter www.twitter.com/EMNMigration

EMN national contact points

Austria www.emn.at

Belgium www.emnbelgium.be

Bulgaria www.emn-bg.com

Croatia www.emn.hr

Cyprus www.moi.gov.cy

Czech Republic www.emncz.eu

Denmark https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/authorities/denmark_en

Estonia www.emn.ee

Finland www.emn.fi

France www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM2

Germany www.emn-germany.de

Greece www.emn.immigration.gov.gr/el/

Hungary www.emnhungary.hu

Ireland www.emn.ie

Italy www.emnitalyncp.it

Latvia www.emn.lv

Lithuania www.emn.lt

Luxembourg www.emnluxembourg.lu

Malta <https://homeaffairs.gov.mt/en/mhas-information/emn/pages/european-migration-network.aspx>

Netherlands www.emnnetherlands.nl

Poland www.emn.gov.pl

Portugal https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/authorities/portugal_en

Romania www.mai.gov.ro

Slovak Republic www.emn.sk

Slovenia www.emm.si

Spain <http://extranjeros.empleo.gob.es/en/redeuropeamigracion>

Sweden www.emnsweden.se

Norway www.emnnorway.no