Acquisition of citizenship in the EU

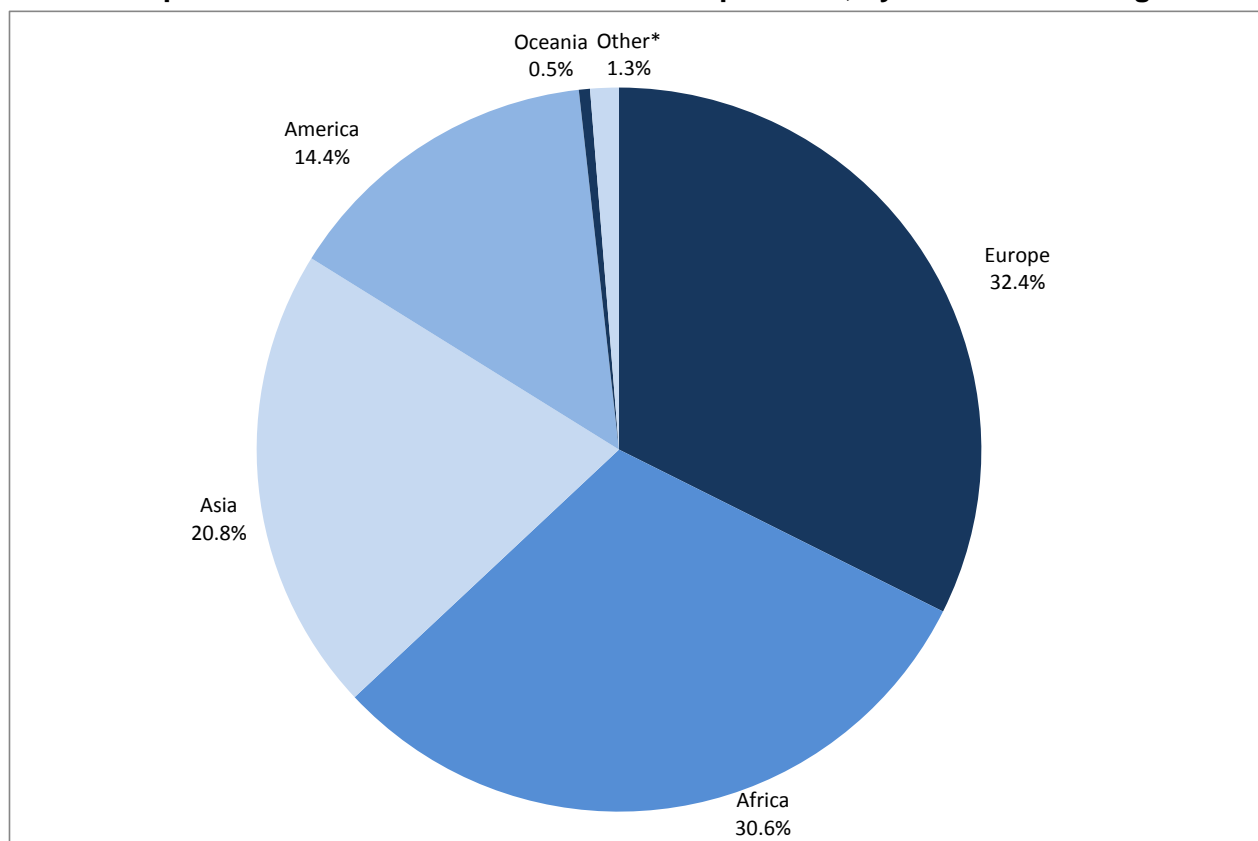# EU Member States granted citizenship to fewer persons in 2015

Moroccans, Albanians and Turks remain the main recipients

In 2015, around 840 000 persons acquired citizenship of a Member State of the **European Union** (EU), down from 890 000 in 2014 and 980 000 in 2013. Since 2010, more than 5 million persons in total were granted a citizenship of an EU Member Sate. Of the total number of persons obtaining the citizenship of one of the EU Member States in 2015, 87% were non-EU citizens.

The largest group acquiring citizenship of an EU Member State in 2015 was citizens of **Morocco** (86 100 persons, of whom 88% acquired citizenship of Italy, Spain or France), ahead of citizens of **Albania** (48 400, 96% acquired citizenship of Italy or Greece), **Turkey** (35 000, 56% acquired German citizenship), **India** (31 000, almost 60% acquired British citizenship), **Romania** (28 400, half acquired Italian citizenship), **Pakistan** (26 300, half acquired British citizenship) and **Algeria** (22 500, over three-quarters acquired French citizenship). Moroccans, Albanians, Turks, Indians, Romanians, Pakistanis and Algerians represented together a third (33%) of the total number of persons who acquired citizenship of an EU Member State in 2015. **Romanians** (28 400 persons) and **Poles** (17 800) were the two largest groups of EU citizens acquiring citizenship of another EU Member State.

These data come from an underline article issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

Recipients of an EU Member State citizenship in 2015, by continents of origin

* Other includes stateless and recipients with unknown citizenship.

Main recipients of an EU Member State citizenship in 2015

Main recipients of an EU citizenship	Total (in 1000)	Main EU Member State granting citizenships	%	Second main EU Member State granting citizenships	%	Third main EU Member State granting citizenships	%
Moroccans	86.1	Italy	37.7	Spain	28.2	France	22.2
Albanians	48.4	Italy	72.6	Greece	23.8	Belgium	1.0
Turks	35.0	Germany	56.3	France	16.0	Netherlands	8.1
Indians	31.0	United Kingdom	59.4	Italy	19.9	Ireland	5.2
Romanians	28.4	Italy	50.7	Germany	10.7	Hungary	9.2
Pakistanis	26.3	United Kingdom	49.7	Italy	21.4	Spain	10.6
Algerians	22.5	France	77.2	Italy	8.0	Spain	6.6
Ukrainians	19.2	Germany	25.6	Portugal	15.1	Poland	10.2
Russians	18.5	Germany	24.6	France	14.4	Finland	9.4
Poles	17.8	Germany	33.6	United Kingdom	21.1	Sweden	13.2
Ecuadorians	17.5	Spain	79.5	Italy	15.2	Belgium	1.4
Iraqis	16.6	Sweden	30.1	Germany	20.8	Denmark	19.1
Nigerians	16.1	United Kingdom	50.0	Italy	15.8	Spain	9.4
Colombians	15.0	Spain	79.3	Italy	7.2	France	5.3
Tunisians	14.6	France	48.1	Italy	38.3	Germany	7.1
Brazilians	14.2	Portugal	44.9	Spain	16.0	Italy	10.2
Somalis	13.7	Sweden	34.9	Netherlands	31.2	United Kingdom	16.2
Peruvians	13.6	Spain	51.3	Italy	40.6	France	2.6
Bolivians	11.8	Spain	94.7	Italy	1.6	Sweden	1.0
Bangladeshis	11.5	Italy	51.6	United Kingdom	31.3	Spain	4.0
Chinese	10.7	United Kingdom	24.0	Italy	17.7	France	17.0
Filipinos	10.6	Italy	28.9	United Kingdom	28.1	Ireland	11.1
Dominicans	10.6	Spain	77.4	Italy	15.9	Germany	2.7
Senegalese	9.7	Italy	42.8	France	34.9	Spain	17.0
Ghanaians	9.0	Italy	38.6	United Kingdom	33.1	Germany	7.9
Kosovars*	8.8	Germany	43.7	Italy	29.8	Sweden	8.0
Serbians	8.8	Italy	30.2	Germany	22.2	Sweden	13.4
Afghans	8.6	Germany	30.0	United Kingdom	16.0	Denmark	15.2
Iranians	8.3	Germany	30.4	United Kingdom	18.2	Sweden	16.1
Egyptians	7.8	Italy	56.7	France	9.2	United Kingdom	8.7

* Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
The source dataset can be found here.

Main recipients of citizenships granted by EU Member States, 2015

	Total number	Main recipients		Second main recipients		Third main recipients	
		Citizens of	%	Citizens of	%	Citizens of	%
EU	**841 246**	**Morocco**	**10.2**	**Albania**	**5.7**	**Turkey**	**4.2**
Belgium	27 071	Morocco	11.7	Romania	4.4	Poland	4.2
Bulgaria	1 275	Ukraine	17.6	Russia	16.8	Turkey	14.0
Czech Republic	2 619	Ukraine	39.8	Russia	11.8	Vietnam	10.2
Denmark	11 745	Iraq	27.0	Afghanistan	11.1	Somalia	6.9
Germany	110 128	Turkey	17.9	Poland	5.4	Ukraine	4.5
Estonia	898	Recognised non-citizen*	82.1	Russia	14.8	Ukraine	2.1
Ireland	13 565	India	11.9	Nigeria	10.0	Philippines	8.6
Greece	13 933	Albania	82.5	Russia	2.2	Georgia	1.6
Spain	114 351	Morocco	21.2	Ecuador	12.2	Colombia	10.4
France	113 608	Morocco	16.8	Algeria	15.3	Tunisia	6.2
Croatia	1 196	Bosnia & Herzegovina	43.2	Kosovo**	15.4	Serbia	11.5
Italy	178 035	Albania	19.7	Morocco	18.2	Romania	8.1
Cyprus	3 322	Russia	34.3	United Kingdom	8.8	Greece	8.0
Latvia	1 897	Recognised non-citizen*	87.1	Russia	3.7	Ukraine	1.7
Lithuania	183	Stateless***	31.1	Russia	30.6	Ukraine	17.5
Luxembourg	3 195	Portugal	36.5	France	10.8	Italy	9.5
Hungary	4 048	Romania	64.4	Ukraine	9.5	Slovakia	5.1
Malta	646	Russia	40.4	United Kingdom	7.7	Ukraine	3.9
Netherlands	27 877	Somalia	15.4	Morocco	11.8	Turkey	10.2
Austria	8 144	Bosnia & Herzegovina	14.9	Turkey	12.2	Serbia	7.8
Poland	3 974	Ukraine	49.2	Belarus	11.9	Armenia	7.2
Portugal	20 396	Brazil	31.3	Ukraine	14.2	Cape Verde	14.0
Romania	2 611	Ukraine	64.0	Moldova	22.7	Turkey	3.4
Slovenia	1 255	Bosnia & Herzegovina	59.0	Macedonia	11.6	Serbia	10.1
Slovakia	309	Ukraine	23.6	Czech Republic	22.7	United States	10.0
Finland	7 921	Russia	21.8	Somalia	12.1	Iraq	7.1
Sweden	49 044	Iraq	10.2	Somalia	9.8	Stateless***	6.7
United Kingdom	118 000	India	15.6	Pakistan	11.1	Nigeria	6.8
Iceland	801	Poland	33.1	Philippines	9.2	Thailand	5.2
Liechtenstein	110	Switzerland	22.7	Austria	20.0	Kosovo**	10.9
Norway	12 411	Eritrea	9.0	Afghanistan	8.8	Iraq	6.5
Switzerland	40 689	Italy	13.4	Germany	12.8	Portugal	8.7

*   A recognised non-citizen is a person who is neither a citizen of the reporting country nor of any other country, and who has established links to the reporting country which include some but not all rights and obligations of full citizenship. A majority of these persons were citizens of the former Soviet Union.
**   Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244.
***   A stateless person is someone who is not recognized as a citizen of any country.
The source dataset can be found here.

9 out of 10 persons granted an EU citizenship in 2015 were non-EU citizens

In sixteen EU Member States, about 90% or more of persons who obtained citizenship in 2015 were non-EU citizens: **Estonia**, **Lithuania** and **Romania** (all 100%), **Bulgaria** (99%), **Spain** (98%), **Latvia** (97%), **Greece** and **Portugal** (both 96%), the **Netherlands**, **Poland** and **Slovenia** (all 94%), **Denmark** (93%), **France** and **Croatia** (both 90%) as well as **Italy** and the **United Kingdom** (both 89%). In contrast, **Luxembourg** (79%) and **Hungary** (72%) were the only Member States where the majority of persons acquiring citizenship in 2015 were citizens of another EU Member State. At **EU** level, 87% (or 732 200 new citizens) of those granted citizenship were non-EU citizens, and 12% (104 900 new citizens) of another EU Member State.

Acquisition of citizenship in the EU Member States, 2015

	Total number	of which (share of, %)		Citizenships acquired per:	
		Citizens of another EU Member State	Non-EU citizens*	1 000 resident population**	100 resident foreigners***
EU	**841 246**	**12%**	**87%**	**1.7**	**2.4**
Belgium	27 071	25%	74%	2.4	2.1
Bulgaria	1 275	1%	99%	0.2	1.9
Czech Republic	2 619	14%	85%	0.2	0.6
Denmark	11 745	7%	93%	2.1	2.8
Germany	110 128	25%	75%	1.3	1.5
Estonia	898	0%	100%	0.7	0.5
Ireland	13 565	23%	77%	2.9	2.5
Greece	13 933	4%	96%	1.3	1.7
Spain	114 351	2%	98%	2.5	2.6
France	113 608	8%	90%	1.7	2.6
Croatia	1 196	10%	90%	0.3	3.3
Italy	178 035	11%	89%	2.9	3.6
Cyprus	3 322	19%	81%	3.9	2.3
Latvia	1 897	3%	97%	1.0	0.6
Lithuania	183	0%	100%	0.1	0.8
Luxembourg	3 195	79%	21%	5.6	1.2
Hungary	4 048	72%	28%	0.4	2.8
Malta	646	19%	81%	1.5	2.4
Netherlands	27 877	6%	94%	1.6	3.6
Austria	8 144	13%	87%	0.9	0.7
Poland	3 974	6%	94%	0.1	3.7
Portugal	20 396	4%	96%	2.0	5.2
Romania	2 611	0%	100%	0.1	2.9
Slovenia	1 255	6%	94%	0.6	1.2
Slovakia	309	34%	66%	0.1	0.5
Finland	7 921	13%	85%	1.4	3.6
Sweden	49 044	22%	76%	5.0	6.7
United Kingdom	118 000	11%	89%	1.8	2.2
Iceland	801	48%	52%	2.4	3.3
Liechtenstein	110	34%	66%	2.9	0.9
Norway	12 411	10%	90%	2.4	2.4
Switzerland	40 689	55%	45%	4.9	2.0

Figures may not add up due to unknown.
*   Non-EU citizens are defined are those not having the citizenship of any of the 28 EU Member States. This category also includes stateless persons and recognised non-citizens.
**   Resident population refers to persons who have lived at their place of residence for at least 12 months or have the intention of staying there for at least 12 months.
*** The term "foreigners" refers to all persons not having the citizenship of the reporting country and thus includes persons with the citizenship of another country (including of another EU Member State), stateless persons and recognised non-citizens.
The source dataset can be found here.

Highest number of citizenships granted per inhabitants in Luxembourg and Sweden

1 in every 5 persons who acquired an EU citizenship in 2015 became citizens of **Italy** (178 000 persons, or 21% of all citizenships granted in the EU in 2015). It was followed by the **United Kingdom** (118 000 or 14%), **Spain** (114 400 or 14%), **France** (113 600 or 14%) and **Germany** (110 100 or 13%).
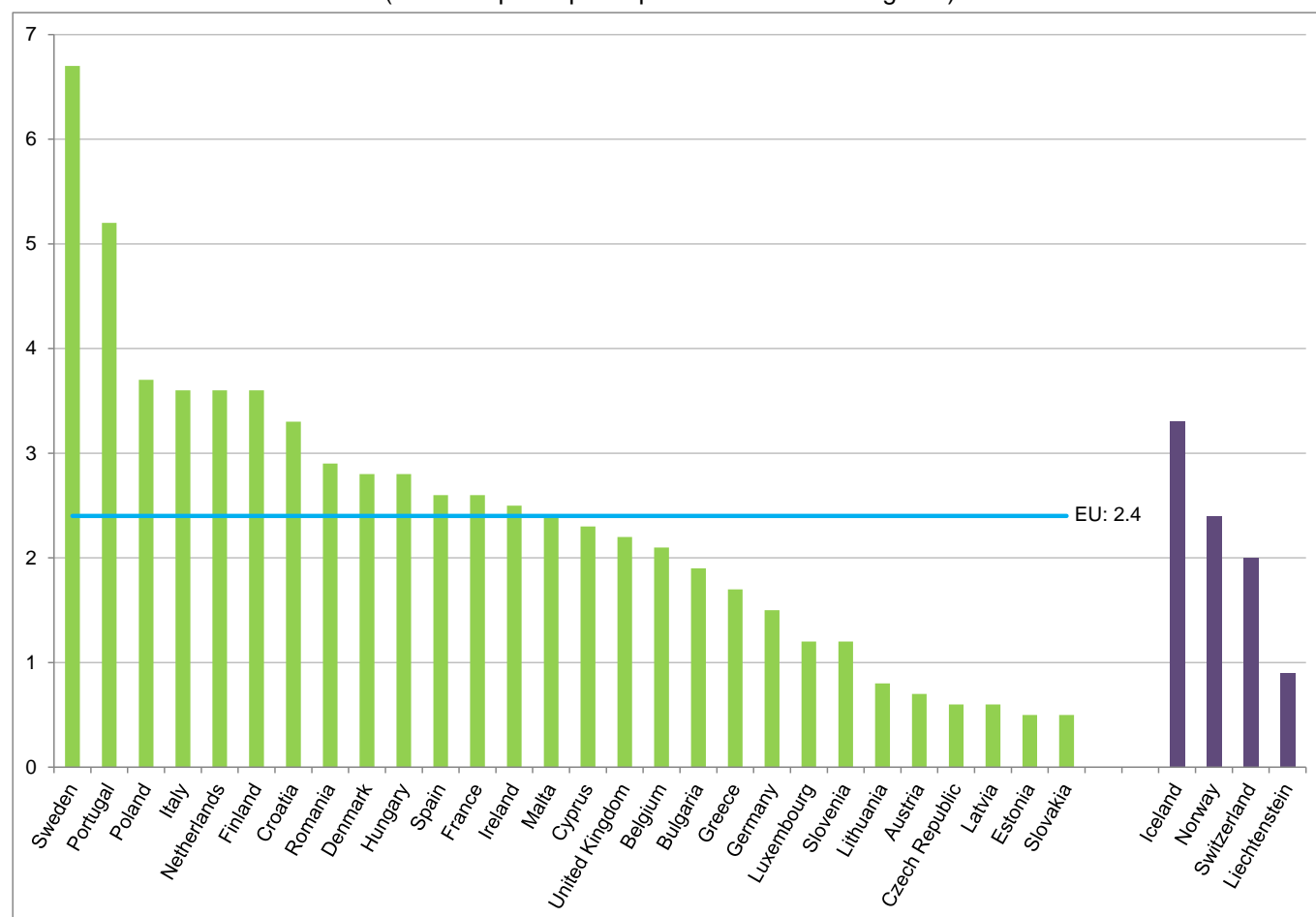
When compared with the total resident population of each Member State, the highest numbers of citizenship granted per 1 000 resident population were recorded in **Luxembourg** (5.6 citizenships granted) and **Sweden** (5.0), ahead of **Cyprus** (3.9), **Italy** and **Ireland** (both 2.9). At **EU** level, 1.7 citizenships were granted per 1 000 inhabitants.

Highest naturalisation rate in Sweden and Portugal

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. In 2015, the highest naturalisation rates were registered in **Sweden** (6.7 citizenships granted per 100 resident foreigners) and **Portugal** (5.2), followed by **Poland** (3.7), **Italy**, the **Netherlands** and **Finland** (all 3.6). At the opposite end of the scale, naturalisation rates below 1 citizenship per 100 resident foreigners were recorded in **Estonia** and **Slovakia** (both 0.5), the **Czech Republic** and **Latvia** (both 0.6), **Austria** (0.7) and **Lithuania** (0.8). At **EU** level, 2.4 citizenships were granted per 100 resident foreigners in 2015.

Of the five EU Member States that granted the most citizenships in 2015, the naturalisation rate was above the EU average in **Italy** (3.6), around the EU average in **France** (2.6), **Spain** (2.6) and the **United Kingdom** (2.2), and below the EU average in **Germany** (1.5).

Naturalisation rates in the EU Member States, 2015
(citizenships acquired per 100 resident foreigners)

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Methods and definitions

The acquisitions of citizenship data are provided 12 months after the reference period to Eurostat by the National Statistical Institutes of the EU Member States in accordance with Regulation 862/2007.

Citizenship is the legal bond between an individual and a state, acquired by birth, naturalisation or other means according to national legislation. **Naturalisation** is the process by which a state grants its citizenship through a formal act on the application of the individual concerned. **Other ways** of granting citizenship may include spouses of nationals, minors adopted by nationals and descendants of nationals born abroad returning to the country of origin of their ancestors. Regulation 862/2007 Art 3.1(d) asks Member States to provide data on *"persons having their usual residence in the territory of the Member State and having acquired during the reference year the citizenship of the Member State and having formerly held the citizenship of another Member State or a third country or having formerly been stateless, disaggregated by age and sex, and by the former citizenship of the persons concerned and by whether the person was formerly stateless"*.

The **naturalisation rate** is the ratio of the number of persons who acquired the citizenship of a country during a calendar year over the stock of foreign residents in the same country at the beginning of the year. The 'naturalisation rate' should be used with caution because the numerator includes all modes of acquisitions and not just naturalisations of eligible residing foreigners and the denominator includes all foreigners and not the relevant population, i.e. those foreigners who are eligible for naturalisation.

For more information

Eurostat database on migration and citizenship

Eurostat metadata on acquisition and loss of citizenship

Eurostat Statistics Explained article on acquisition of citizenship statistics

Eurostat interactive infographic on acquisition of citizenship in the EU