

50/2020 - 30 March 2020

## Acquisition of citizenship in the EU

# EU Member States granted citizenship to over 670 thousand people in 2018

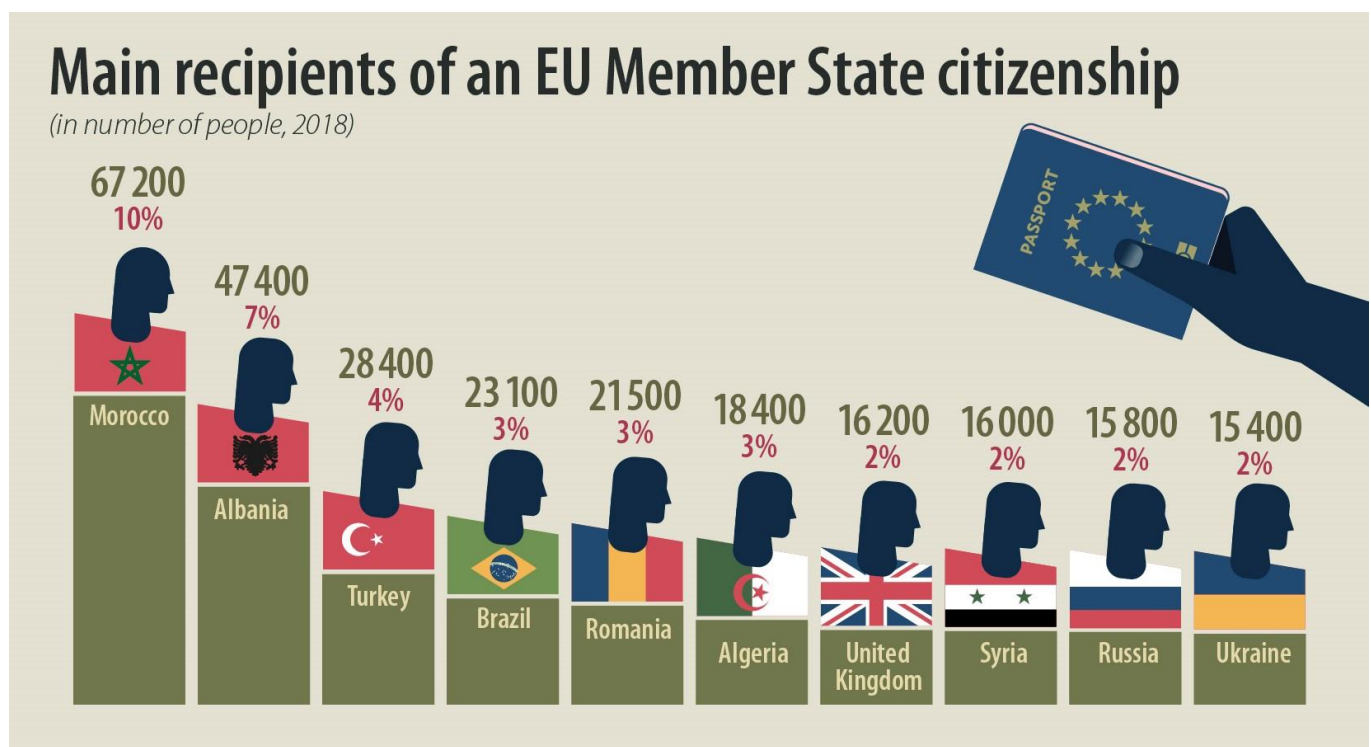
Moroccans, Albanians and Turks were the main recipients

In 2018, around 672 300 persons acquired citizenship of one of the 27 **Member States of the European Union** (EU), down from 700 600 in 2017 and 843 900 in 2016. Of the total number of persons obtaining the citizenship of one of the EU Member States in 2018, 13% were former citizens of another EU Member State, while the majority were non-EU citizens or stateless.

The largest group acquiring citizenship of an EU Member State where they lived in 2018 was citizens of **Morocco** (67 200 persons, of whom 84% acquired citizenship of Spain, Italy or France), ahead of citizens of **Albania** (47 400, 97% acquired citizenship of Greece or Italy), **Turkey** (28 400, 59% acquired German citizenship), **Brazil** (23 100, 76% acquired citizenship of Italy or Portugal), **Romania** (21 500, 51% acquired citizenship of Italy or Germany), **Algeria** (18 400, 81% acquired French citizenship), **the United Kingdom** (16 200, 59% acquired citizenship of Germany or France), **Syria** (16 000, 66% acquired citizenship of Sweden), **Russia** (15 800, 31% acquired German citizenship) and **Ukraine** (15 400, 55% acquired citizenship of Germany, Poland or Italy).

**Romanians** (21 500 persons), **Poles** (13 900) and **Italians** (8 100) were the three largest groups of EU citizens acquiring citizenship of another EU Member State.

These data come from an [article](#) issued by **Eurostat**, the statistical office of the European Union.



## The largest relative increase in number of granted citizenship in Luxembourg and Spain

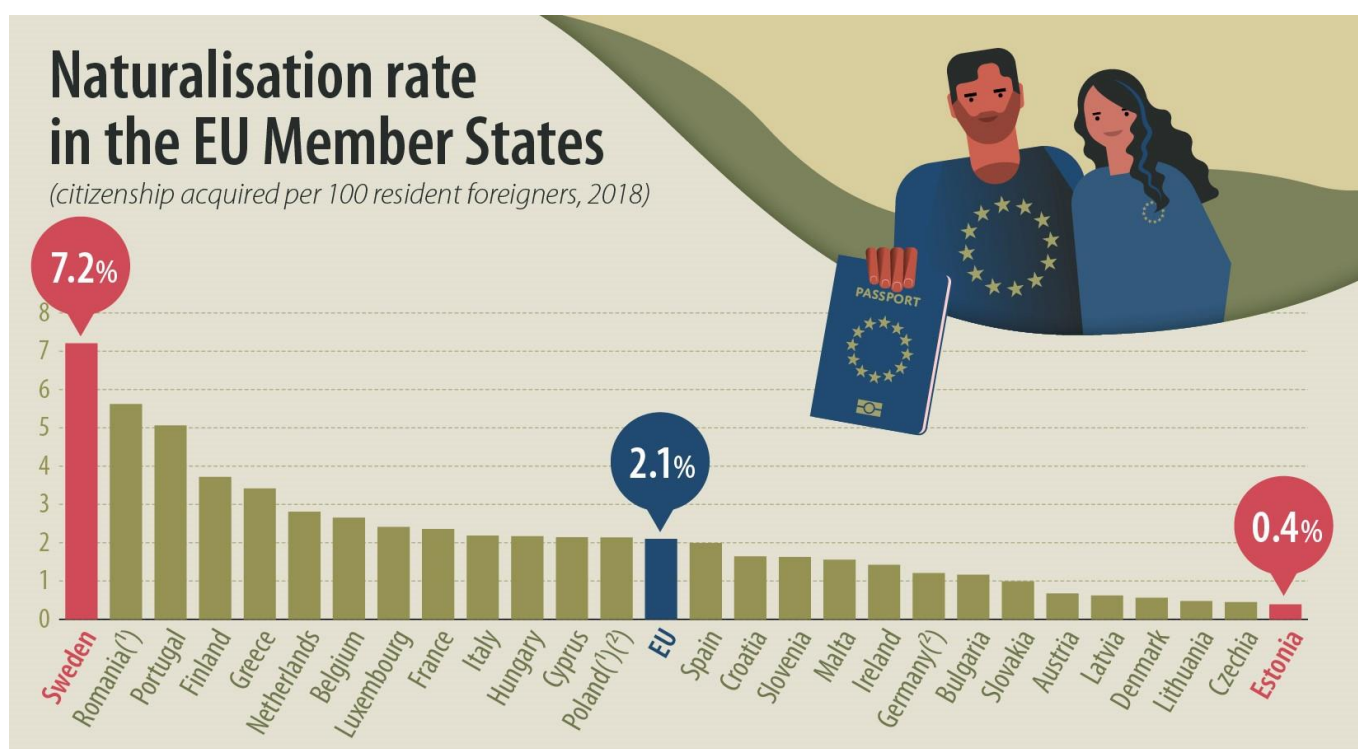
The number of citizenships granted fell in 14 EU Member States in 2018, with the largest relative decrease registered in **Denmark** (from 7 272 in 2017 to 2 836 in 2018, or -61%) and **Malta** (from 1 973 to 1 044, or -47%), followed by **Czechia** (from 3 480 to 2 317, or -33%), **Lithuania** (from 187 to 130, or -30%), **Finland** (from 12 219 to 9 211, or -25%) and **Italy** (from 146 605 to 112 523, or -23%).

13 of 27 EU Member States granted citizenship to more people in 2018 than they did in 2017. The largest relative increases were recorded in **Luxembourg** (from 4 980 persons to 6 950 persons, or +40%), **Spain** (from 66 498 to 90 774, +37%), **Slovenia** (from 1 563 to 1 978, or +27%), **Hungary** (from 2 787 to 3 508, or +26%), **Croatia** (from 688 to 853, or +24%) and **Poland** (from 4 233 to 5 115, or +21%).

## Highest naturalisation rate in Sweden

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 2018, the highest naturalisation rates were registered in **Sweden** (7.2 citizenships granted per 100 resident foreigners), **Romania** (5.6) and **Portugal** (5.1), followed by **Finland** (3.7), **Greece** (3.4), the **Netherlands** (2.8) and **Belgium** (2.6).

At the opposite end of the scale, naturalisation rates below 1 citizenship acquisition per 100 resident foreigners were recorded in **Estonia** and **Czechia** (both 0.4), **Lithuania** (0.5), **Denmark** and **Latvia** (both 0.6), **Austria** (0.7), as well as **Slovakia** (1.0).



(\*) Estimated (2) Provisional

ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Source dataset: [migr\\_acqs](#)

## Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU27) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden.

The United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Information on dissemination of European statistics from 1 February 2020 is published on the [Eurostat website](#).

## 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.

## Country notes

Germany: Data are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5 on provisional basis.

Romania: Data by individual former citizenship are not available.

## 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

European Statistics [Code of Practice](#)

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## Main recipients of an EU\* Member State citizenship in 2018

| 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 | %    |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|------|---|------|--|------|
| Morocco                              | 67.2            | Spain                                      | 37.7 | Italy   | 23.1 | France   | 22.9 |
| Albania                              | 47.4            | Greece                                     | 51.0 | Italy   | 46.0 | Belgium  | 0.8  |
| Turkey                               | 28.4            | Germany**                                  | 58.8 | France  | 18.0 | Netherlands                                      | 9.5  |
| Brazil                               | 23.1            | Italy                                      | 46.1 | Portugal  | 29.9 | Spain  | 9.3  |
| Romania                              | 21.5            | Italy                                      | 30.4 | Germany**   | 20.2 | Belgium  | 10.3 |
| Algeria                              | 18.4            | France                                     | 80.9 | Spain   | 7.9  | Italy  | 4.3  |
| United Kingdom                       | 16.2            | Germany**                                  | 38.6 | France  | 20.2 | Sweden   | 8.3  |
| Syria                                | 16.0            | Sweden                                     | 66.5 | Germany**   | 18.0 | France   | 4.0  |
| Russia                               | 15.8            | Germany**                                  | 31.3 | France  | 12.8 | Finland  | 11.2 |
| Ukraine                              | 15.4            | Germany**                                  | 20.8 | Poland***   | 18.2 | Italy  | 15.8 |
| Poland                               | 13.9            | Germany**                                  | 44.9 | Sweden  | 12.8 | Belgium  | 11.0 |
| India                                | 12.5            | Italy                                      | 43.3 | Germany**   | 14.1 | Portugal   | 6.8  |
| Tunisia                              | 11.4            | France                                     | 58.9 | Italy   | 21.9 | Germany**  | 10.4 |
| Ecuador                              | 11.1            | Spain                                      | 72.1 | Italy   | 20.8 | Belgium  | 2.9  |
| Somalia                              | 10.1            | Sweden                                     | 66.6 | Netherlands                                       | 18.2 | Finland  | 8.5  |
| Iraq                                 | 9.8             | Germany**                                  | 41.6 | Sweden  | 26.3 | Netherlands                                      | 12.9 |
| Stateless****                        | 9.2             | Sweden                                     | 61.3 | Netherlands                                       | 25.9 | Germany**  | 7.7  |
| Colombia                             | 8.9             | Spain                                      | 76.3 | France  | 7.0  | Italy  | 6.7  |
| Pakistan                             | 8.8             | Spain                                      | 23.3 | Italy   | 22.4 | Germany**  | 15.0 |
| Bolivia                              | 8.7             | Spain                                      | 93.7 | Italy   | 2.3  | Sweden   | 1.1  |
| Serbia                               | 8.7             | Germany**                                  | 28.5 | Italy   | 23.5 | Sweden   | 14.6 |
| Italy                                | 8.1             | Germany**                                  | 50.2 | Belgium   | 16.8 | France   | 12.5 |
| Kosovo*****                          | 8.0             | Germany**                                  | 48.2 | Italy   | 27.1 | Austria  | 7.3  |
| Senegal                              | 7.8             | France                                     | 37.9 | Italy   | 37.5 | Spain  | 18.1 |
| Afghanistan                          | 7.5             | Germany**                                  | 34.2 | Sweden  | 25.6 | Belgium  | 14.3 |
| Iran                                 | 7.4             | Germany**                                  | 41.8 | Sweden  | 23.6 | Netherlands                                      | 10.9 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina               | 7.2             | Germany**                                  | 26.0 | Slovenia  | 18.2 | Austria  | 14.2 |
| Dominican Republic                   | 6.6             | Spain                                      | 75.4 | Italy   | 14.3 | Germany**  | 4.4  |
| Peru                                 | 6.6             | Spain                                      | 50.0 | Italy   | 37.0 | France   | 4.2  |
| China                                | 6.3             | France                                     | 25.5 | Italy   | 24.0 | Germany**  | 13.9 |

\* EU represents the European Union of 27 Member States after 1 February 2020.

\*\* Provisional data

\*\*\* Provisional and estimated data

\*\*\*\* A stateless person is someone who is not recognized as a citizen of any country.

\*\*\*\*\* Kosovo designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Source dataset: [migr\\_acq](#)

## Main recipients of citizenships granted by EU Member States, 2018

|                       | Total number   | 2018/<br>2017 | Main recipients            |             | Second main recipients |            | Third main recipients |            |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
|                       |                |               | Citizens of                | %           | Citizens of            | %          | Citizens of           | %          |
| <b>EU*</b>            | <b>672 270</b> | <b>-4%</b>    | <b>Morocco</b>             | <b>10.0</b> | <b>Albania</b>         | <b>7.1</b> | <b>Turkey</b>         | <b>4.2</b> |
| <b>Belgium</b>        | 36 200         | -3%           | Morocco                    | 13.4        | Romania                | 6.1        | Poland                | 4.2        |
| <b>Bulgaria</b>       | 997            | 9%            | Turkey                     | 20.7        | Russia                 | 19.1       | Ukraine               | 18.6       |
| <b>Czechia</b>        | 2 317          | -33%          | Ukraine                    | 32.9        | Russia                 | 19.3       | Slovakia              | 14.9       |
| <b>Denmark</b>        | 2 836          | -61%          | Sweden                     | 6.5         | Germany                | 5.9        | Iceland               | 5.1        |
| <b>Germany**</b>      | 116 750        | 1%            | Turkey                     | 14.3        | United Kingdom         | 5.4        | Poland                | 5.3        |
| <b>Estonia</b>        | 766            | -13%          | Recognised non-citizen**** | 64.9        | Russia                 | 26.0       | Ukraine               | 3.4        |
| <b>Ireland</b>        | 8 223          | 0%            | Poland                     | 17.8        | Romania                | 10.0       | United Kingdom        | 8.4        |
| <b>Greece</b>         | 27 857         | -19%          | Albania                    | 86.9        | Ukraine                | 1.4        | Russia                | 1.3        |
| <b>Spain</b>          | 90 774         | 37%           | Morocco                    | 27.9        | Bolivia                | 9.0        | Ecuador               | 8.8        |
| <b>France</b>         | 110 014        | -4%           | Morocco                    | 14.0        | Algeria                | 13.5       | Tunisia               | 6.1        |
| <b>Croatia</b>        | 853            | 24%           | Bosnia & Herzegovina       | 48.3        | Kosovo*****            | 15.6       | Serbia                | 8.9        |
| <b>Italy</b>          | 112 523        | -23%          | Albania                    | 19.4        | Morocco                | 13.8       | Brazil                | 9.5        |
| <b>Cyprus</b>         | 3 198          | -14%          | United Kingdom             | 20.6        | Russia                 | 19.6       | Greece                | 11.5       |
| <b>Latvia</b>         | 1 683          | -6%           | Recognised non-citizen**** | 72.1        | Russia                 | 6.4        | United Kingdom        | 5.8        |
| <b>Lithuania</b>      | 130            | -30%          | Russia                     | 24.6        | Belarus                | 18.5       | Stateless*****        | 18.5       |
| <b>Luxembourg</b>     | 6 950          | 40%           | Portugal                   | 22.9        | France                 | 10.9       | Montenegro            | 7.0        |
| <b>Hungary</b>        | 3 508          | 26%           | Romania                    | 60.5        | Slovakia               | 6.4        | Ukraine               | 5.5        |
| <b>Malta</b>          | 1 044          | -47%          | United Kingdom             | 28.3        | Italy                  | 7.1        | Russia                | 5.3        |
| <b>Netherlands</b>    | 27 852         | 1%            | Morocco                    | 10.8        | Turkey                 | 9.7        | Stateless*****        | 8.5        |
| <b>Austria</b>        | 9 355          | 3%            | Bosnia & Herzegovina       | 11.0        | Turkey                 | 8.9        | Serbia                | 6.7        |
| <b>Poland***</b>      | 5 115          | 21%           | Ukraine                    | 54.7        | Belarus                | 21.7       | Russia                | 4.8        |
| <b>Portugal</b>       | 21 333         | 18%           | Brazil                     | 32.5        | Cape Verde             | 17.1       | Ukraine               | 8.2        |
| <b>Romania</b>        | 6 264          | -8%           | :                          | :           | :                      | :          | :                     |            |
| <b>Slovenia</b>       | 1 978          | 27%           | Bosnia & Herzegovina       | 66.8        | North Macedonia        | 11.2       | Serbia                | 9.0        |
| <b>Slovakia</b>       | 721            | 12%           | Ukraine                    | 17.6        | Czechia                | 16.5       | United Kingdom        | 8.3        |
| <b>Finland</b>        | 9 211          | -25%          | Russia                     | 19.2        | Somalia                | 9.3        | Iraq                  | 6.7        |
| <b>Sweden</b>         | 63 818         | -7%           | Syria                      | 16.6        | Somalia                | 10.6       | Stateless*****        | 8.8        |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> | 157 004        | 28%           | India                      | 9.6         | Pakistan               | 7.5        | Poland                | 6.1        |
| <b>Iceland</b>        | 569            | -11%          | Poland                     | 26.2        | Syria                  | 10.0       | Thailand              | 6.5        |
| <b>Liechtenstein</b>  | 139            | -5%           | Turkey                     | 23.7        | Switzerland            | 17.3       | Kosovo*****           | 11.5       |
| <b>Norway</b>         | 10 268         | -53%          | Somalia                    | 18.3        | Eritrea                | 10.6       | Stateless*****        | 6.6        |
| <b>Switzerland</b>    | 42 493         | -6%           | Germany                    | 14.4        | Italy                  | 11.9       | Kosovo*****           | 8.0        |

: Data not available

\* EU represents the European Union of 27 Member States after 1 February 2020.

\*\* Provisional data

\*\*\* Provisional and estimated data

\*\*\*\* 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.

\*\*\*\*\* A stateless person is someone who is not recognized as a citizen of any country.

\*\*\*\*\* Kosovo designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Source dataset: [migr\\_acq](#)