

Acquisition of citizenship in the EU

EU Member States granted citizenship to over 800 thousand persons in 2017

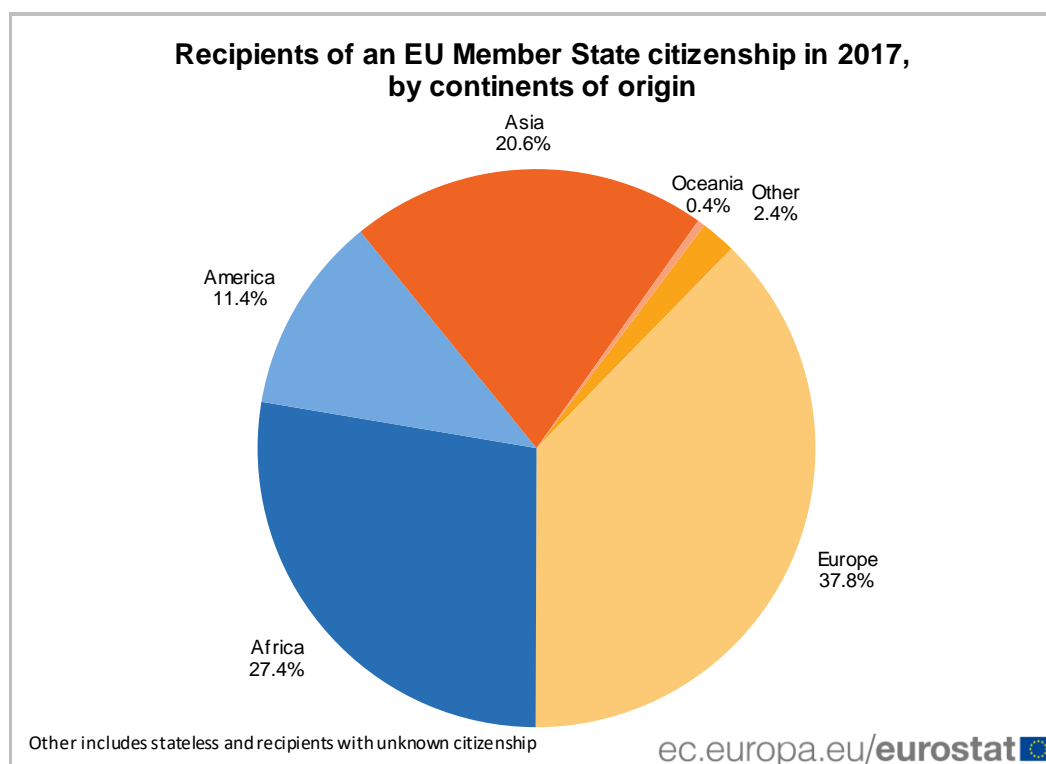
Moroccans, Albanians and Indians were the main recipients

In 2017, around 825 000 persons acquired citizenship of a Member State of the **European Union** (EU), down from 995 000 in 2016 and 841 000 in 2015. Of the total number of persons obtaining the citizenship of one of the EU Member States in 2017, 17% 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 2017 was citizens of **Morocco** (67 900 persons, of whom 83% acquired citizenship of Italy, Spain or France), ahead of citizens of **Albania** (58 900, 97% acquired citizenship of Greece or Italy), **India** (31 600, over 53% acquired British citizenship), **Turkey** (29 900, over 50% acquired German citizenship), **Romania** (25 000, 32% acquired Italian citizenship), **Pakistan** (23 100, 45% acquired citizenship of the United Kingdom), **Poland** (22 000, 63% acquired citizenship of the United Kingdom or Germany), and **Brazil** (21 600, 74% acquired citizenship of Italy or Portugal).

Moroccans, Albanians, Indians, Turks, Romanians, Pakistanis, Poles and Brazilians represented together about a third (34%) of the total number of persons who acquired citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017. **Romanians** (25 000 persons), **Poles** (22 000) and **Britons** (15 000) 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 number of UK nationals acquiring citizenship of another EU Member State more than doubled in 2017

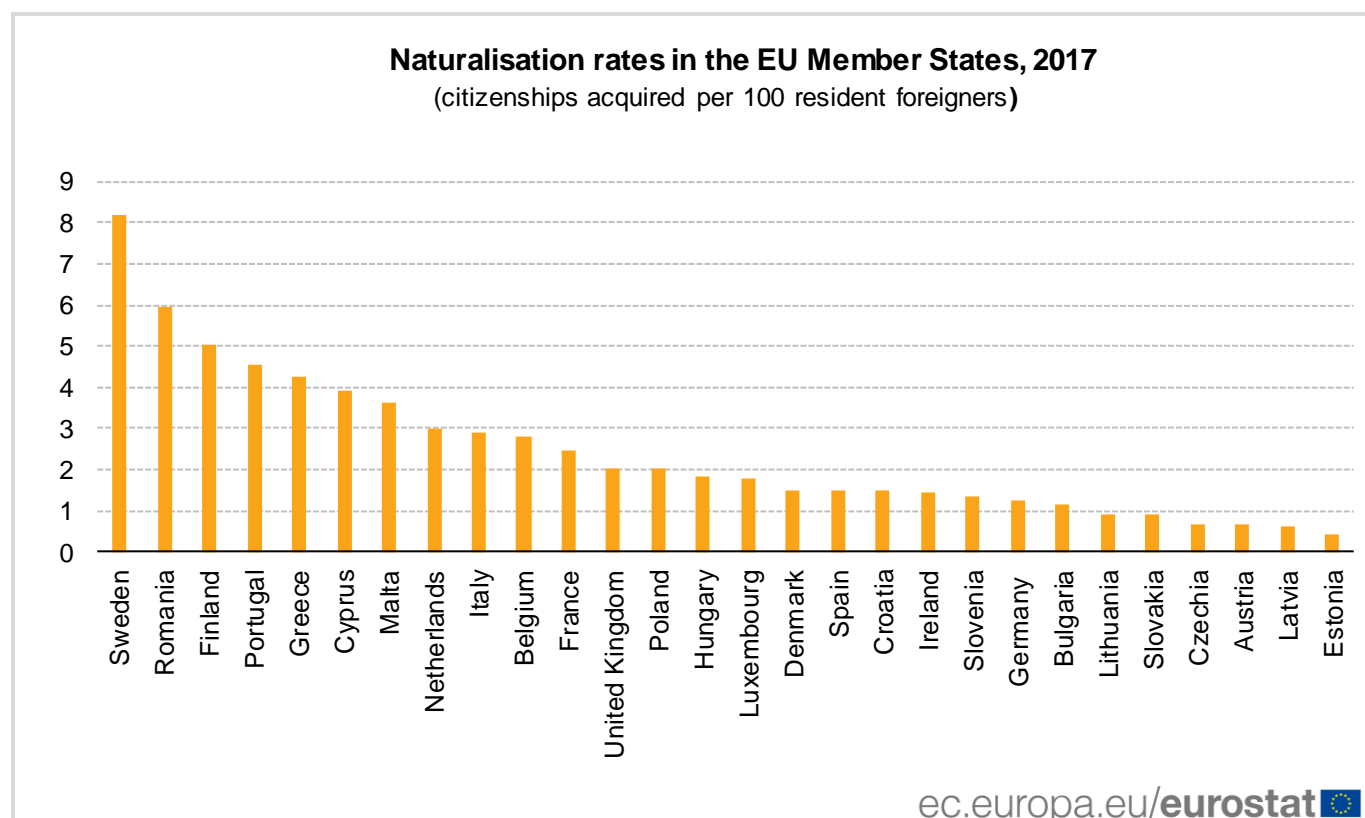
Half of the Member States granted citizenship to more people in 2017 than they did in 2016. The largest relative increases were recorded in **Romania** (from 4 527 persons in 2016 to 6 804 persons in 2017, or +50%), **Luxembourg** (from 3 315 to 4 980, also +50%), **Slovakia** (from 484 to 645, or +33%), **Malta** (from 1 495 to 1 973, or +32%) and **Finland** (from 9 375 to 12 219, or +30%).

The number of citizenships granted fell in the other half of the Member States in 2017, with the largest decrease registered in **Croatia** (from 3 973 to 688, or -83%), followed by **Spain** (from 150 944 to 66 498, or -56%), **Denmark** (from 15 028 to 7 272, or -52%), and **Estonia** (from 1 780 to 880, or -51%).

Focusing on former citizenships for which at least 100 people acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2017, the largest relative increase compared with 2016 was for citizens of the **United Kingdom** (from 6 555 people in 2016 to 14 911 in 2017, or +127%), **Luxembourg** (from 57 to 109, or +91%), **Malta** (from 80 to 148, or +85%), **Saudi Arabia** (from 277 to 507, or +83%) and **France** (from 3 501 to 5 778, or +65%).

Highest naturalisation rates in Sweden and Romania

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 2017, the highest naturalisation rates were registered in **Sweden** (8.2 citizenships granted per 100 resident foreigners), **Romania** (5.9) and **Finland** (5.0), followed by **Portugal** (4.5), **Greece** (4.2) and **Cyprus** (3.9). At the opposite end of the scale, naturalisation rates below 1 citizenship acquisition per 100 resident foreigners were recorded in **Estonia** (0.4), **Latvia** (0.6), **Austria** and **Czechia** (both 0.7), **Slovakia** and **Lithuania** (both 0.9).



The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) 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, 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

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Main recipients of an EU Member State citizenship in 2017

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	67.9	Italy	33.4	Spain	25.2	France	24.6
Albanians	58.9	Greece	50.6	Italy	46.1	Belgium	1.0
Indians	31.6	United Kingdom	52.5	Italy	25.9	Germany	5.1
Turks	29.9	Germany	50.0	France	17.8	Netherlands	9.9
Romanians	25.0	Italy	32.2	Germany	17.1	United Kingdom	12.1
Pakistanis	23.1	United Kingdom	44.9	Italy	26.7	Spain	7.4
Poles	22.0	United Kingdom	32.3	Germany	30.1	Sweden	9.5
Brazilians	21.6	Italy	46.0	Portugal	28.2	Spain	6.0
Russians	20.8	Germany	22.7	France	17.0	Finland	13.2
Algerians	20.1	France	80.8	Italy	5.7	Spain	4.9
Ukrainians	19.0	Germany	17.9	Italy	14.2	Romania	13.1
Somalians	14.9	Sweden	54.5	Netherlands	20.1	United Kingdom	13.9
Britons	14.9	Germany	45.9	France	11.6	Belgium	9.3
Syrians	13.6	Sweden	63.6	Germany	18.3	France	4.7
Nigerians	12.9	United Kingdom	53.8	Italy	15.1	Germany	7.4
Tunisians	12.6	France	56.1	Italy	25.4	Germany	9.0
Ecuadorians	11.8	Spain	62.1	Italy	29.1	Belgium	4.1
Iraqis	11.6	Germany	30.1	Sweden	28.3	Netherlands	12.0
Italians	11.2	Germany	37.9	United Kingdom	31.4	Belgium	10.5
Afghans	9.8	Germany	24.5	Sweden	23.6	United Kingdom	14.6
Bangladeshis	9.6	Italy	46.2	United Kingdom	32.3	Sweden	4.4
Senegalese	9.5	Italy	47.4	France	34.3	Spain	12.4
Chinese	9.2	United Kingdom	23.1	France	18.8	Italy	17.3
Iranians	9.2	Germany	29.3	United Kingdom	19.6	Sweden	19.5
Stateless*	9.1	Sweden	77.8	Germany	8.6	Netherlands	4.0
Serbians	9.1	Germany	21.4	Sweden	19.9	Italy	18.9
Filipinos	8.7	United Kingdom	32.3	Italy	22.6	Spain	7.8
Colombians	8.2	Spain	68.8	Italy	9.2	France	8.3
Kosovars**	8.2	Germany	48.0	Italy	30.2	Austria	8.1
Ghanaians	8.1	Italy	37.0	United Kingdom	32.1	Germany	10.3

* 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.

The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Main recipients of citizenships granted by EU Member States, 2017

	Total number	2017/ 2016	Main recipients		Second main recipients		Third main recipients	
			Citizens of	%	Citizens of	%	Citizens of	%
EU	825 447	-17%	Morocco	8.2	Albania	7.1	India	3.8
Belgium	37 399	17%	Morocco	13.6	Romania	5.4	Poland	4.0
Bulgaria	914	-44%	Ukraine	22.3	Russia	19.0	Turkey	12.0
Czechia	3 480	-24%	Ukraine	34.5	Russia	17.0	Slovakia	13.2
Denmark	7 272	-52%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	5.1	Poland	5.1	Iraq	4.9
Germany	115 421	2%	Turkey	13.0	United Kingdom	5.9	Poland	5.8
Estonia	880	-51%	Recognised non-citizen*	66.9	Russia	25.5	Ukraine	3.4
Ireland	8 195	-18%	Poland	16.6	Romania	9.3	India	8.1
Greece	34 305	3%	Albania	86.8	Ukraine	1.3	Moldova	1.1
Spain	66 498	-56%	Morocco	25.7	Ecuador	11.0	Bolivia	9.2
France	114 274	-4%	Morocco	14.6	Algeria	14.2	Tunisia	6.2
Croatia	688	-83%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	44.9	Kosovo***	15.1	Serbia	14.0
Italy	146 605	-27%	Albania	18.5	Morocco	15.4	Brazil	6.8
Cyprus	5 517	18%	Russia	23.8	United Kingdom	9.1	Ukraine	8.7
Latvia	1 794	-8%	Recognised non-citizen*	71.0	United Kingdom	6.6	Russia	6.5
Lithuania	187	6%	Russia	27.8	Ukraine	19.3	Stateless**	19.3
Luxembourg	4 980	50%	Portugal	26.6	France	10.9	United Kingdom	7.6
Hungary	2 787	-35%	Romania	63.0	Ukraine	6.7	Slovakia	4.9
Malta	1 973	32%	Russia	23.5	Saudi Arabia	17.3	United Kingdom	9.9
Netherlands	27 663	-3%	Somalia	10.8	Turkey	10.7	Morocco	10.7
Austria	9 125	7%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	14.1	Turkey	8.5	Kosovo***	7.3
Poland	4 233	15%	Ukraine	56.6	Belarus	17.9	Russia	5.2
Portugal	18 022	-28%	Brazil	33.8	Cape Verde	14.4	Ukraine	10.6
Romania	6 804	50%	:	:	:	:	:	
Slovenia	1 563	21%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	58.7	North Macedonia	13.3	Serbia	9.8
Slovakia	645	33%	Ukraine	20.0	Serbia	19.2	Czechia	14.1
Finland	12 219	30%	Russia	22.6	Somalia	7.8	Iraq	6.1
Sweden	68 898	12%	Syria	12.5	Somalia	11.8	Stateless**	10.3
United Kingdom	123 106	-18%	India	13.5	Pakistan	8.4	Poland	5.8
Iceland	637	-9%	Poland	35.0	Philippines	6.4	Thailand	5.3
Liechtenstein	147	-12%	Turkey	23.8	Switzerland	16.3	Kosovo***	12.9
Norway	21 648	58%	Eritrea	13.7	Somalia	8.1	Thailand	7.7
Switzerland	44 949	5%	Germany	13.3	Italy	13.0	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.

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

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: Data not available.

The source dataset can be found [here](#).