Pathways to citizenship for third-country nationals in the EU Member States

Common Template for EMN Study 2019

Final version: 5 August 2019

Subject: Pathways to citizenship for third-country nationals in the EU Member States

Action: EMN NCPs are invited to complete this template and submit their national report by 2 December 2019.

If needed, further clarifications can be provided by directly contacting the EMN Service Provider (ICF) at emn@icf.com.

1 STUDY AIMS AND RATIONALE

The European Convention on Nationality, signed in 1997, establishes principles and rules relating to the acquisition and loss of nationality and issue of multiple nationality. To date, 20 Member States have signed the Convention,1 while 13 EU Member States have ratified it.2 Although awarding citizenship is a prerogative of the Member States, national regulations have to be implemented with due regard to EU law. This is particularly important as the establishment of Union citizenship by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 conferred a number of rights and privileges to all persons who are citizens of an EU Member State. Examining and comparing the different rules and regulations in place in Member States is relevant, as the right to free movement for Union citizens means that the decision of one country over who to accept or reject as citizens can impact all other Member States as well. The acquisition of citizenship has been a topic of debate in many Member States in recent years, with the need to integrate migrants.

This EMN study aims at mapping and comparing the various approaches of EU Member States regarding third-country nationals’ acquisition of citizenship in a Member State. It will focus in particular on the ordinary naturalisation for new migrants3 to the EU and therefore largely excludes the acquisition of citizenship through special naturalisation4. Ordinary naturalisation is considered to be “any acquisition after birth of a citizenship not previously held by the person concerned that requires an application to public authorities and a decision by these.”5 This study will include a review of the conditions and requirements for naturalisation (e.g. length of legal stay, definition of legal stay, knowledge of language, economic and housing situation) and the administrative processes used by the Member States to determine whether a person is eligible to acquire citizenship or not. The study will examine whether Member States’ permit dual citizenships and, if so, under which conditions. The study will also aim to explore how the acquisition of citizenship links to integration policies in the Member States, and whether naturalisation is considered the end-point of an integration process or whether acquisition of citizenship is intended to facilitate integration.

1.1 TARGET GROUPS / AUDIENCES

This study targets policy-makers at EU level (e.g. in the area of integration and intra-EU free movement) as well as broader target groups at national level, such as national policy-makers (migration/integration), researchers, and experts at those national authorities that are responsible for citizenship-related administrative procedures. This study would also be of interest to the wider public because of its topicality and due to the growing number of individuals becoming citizens of a Member State of the EU or acquiring a second (dual) citizenship.

1 AT, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SE
2 AT, BG, CZ, DE, DK, FI, HU, LU, NL, PT, RO, SK, SE
3 For the purpose of this study, ‘new migrants’ refer to third-country nationals who do not have a pre-existing historical tie with the Member State (ethnic, family, historical).
4 i.e. acquisition of citizenship through automatic acquisition, by marriage, through investor scheme and for political and/or discretionary reasons are excluded from the scope of this study
2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on citizenship matters as defined in the EMN glossary or otherwise commonly used. It shall cover the acquisition, by a third-country national, of the citizenship of an EU Member State. The study covers the broad category of third-country nationals who immigrated to the EU as first generation (‘new migrants’) and thus excludes second-and third generation migrants. If it is difficult to make the distinction in your Member State, please mention this throughout the template wherever relevant. EU citizens acquiring the citizenship of another EU Member State are not covered. The acquisition of citizenship of an EU Member State by persons living in a third country is also outside of the scope of this study.

As far as policies and legislation regarding the acquisition of citizenship is concerned, this study shall reflect the most recent situation and developments in the Member States, therefore focusing on 2019. Regarding policy and legal developments, it also appears useful to trace any such developments over the past five years. If reasonable, contributing EMN NCPs may also include planned legal or policy developments that have not yet come into effect at the time of writing.

As regards statistics, the study shall cover a five-year period, from 2014 to 2018.

3 EU LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

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 and received international protection. When, how and under which circumstances a third-country national can acquire the citizenship of an EU Member State is an essential dimension of integration processes. The acquisition of citizenship can be seen as the final step of an individual’s successful integration process, as an incentive for individuals to become part of a new society or both. According to Eurostat, roughly 825 000 individuals became citizens of a Member State of the EU in 2017, most of them in Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany and France. As the EMN has not previously conducted a comparative study on the acquisition of citizenship, the proposed topic will fill a significant gap in the thematic activities of the network.

Awarding citizenship is a prerogative of the Member States, which they must exercise having due regard to EU law. Indeed, Member States solely are responsible for laying down the conditions for the acquisition of citizenship. However, citizens of a Member State also enjoy the rights of EU citizenship, including that of mobility and free movement across all Member States. As such, the determination of citizenship by one Member State implies a responsibility to all others. In this sense, citizenship has an important EU dimension. As pointed out by the Court of Justice of the EU, while laying down the conditions of acquisition and loss of citizenship falls within the remit of national competence, in doing so Member States must have due regard to EU law.

Three main modes of naturalisation exist:

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

Furthermore, as noted by the European Commission, 24 additional types of acquisition of citizenship are found in the EU, including the facilitation of conditions for certain ethnic groups, on grounds of socialisation or family links. This hints at the complexity of the legal provisions surrounding the acquisition of citizenship.

The study will also seek to examine how the Member States support third-country nationals in applying for citizenship and inform them about their rights and duties as national and EU citizens.

The study also presents an opportunity for Member States to cooperate and share good practices on matters relating to citizenship and integration by comparing and analysing the various national rules and procedures used at national level.

---

7 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
4 PRIMARY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

- Under what conditions can first generation migrants obtain the citizenship of the countries participating in this study? This includes, among other conditions/requirements, the length of legal stay in the country (with temporary/permanent residence status), the definition of legal stay or residence, knowledge of the language, economic situation, suitable housing, good conduct, or any legal or symbolic commitments to adhere to societal rules and norms.
- Are conditions different for different groups of third-country nationals, such as refugees or other groups significantly represented in the respective Member State (e.g. children, citizens of neighbouring third-countries, stateless people, investors)?
- Are there different procedures to acquiring citizenship (such as ordinary naturalisation by registration or by application)? How do these procedures work and how long do they take? To what extent are these procedures digitalised and applications submitted electronically?
- Is dual citizenship possible, and if so, under what conditions?
- What is the role of citizenship, including dual or multiple citizenships, in immigrant integration?

5 RELEVANT SOURCES AND LITERATURE

Comparable EU statistics on the acquisition of citizenship in the Member States are available at Eurostat. Additional statistical material should be available, in each country, at national level. It should be noted that although this study focuses on first-generation migrants, statistics extracted from Eurostat and provided by Member States will generally include all third-country nationals, including children/persons with a migrant family background ('second- and third-generation').

Many reports, analyses and comparisons regarding citizenship are available at the Global Citizenship Observatory GLOBALCIT, the successor of EUDO CITIZENSHIP, which started in 2009 with a focus on citizenship laws in the EU Member States and then gradually expanded its scope. The MACIMIDE Global Expatriate Dual Citizenship Dataset charts the rules that existed in near all states of the world since 1960 with regard to the loss or renunciation of citizenship after a citizen of a respective state voluntarily acquires the citizenship of another state. The Quality of Nationality Index is relevant in that provides information on citizenship by investment.

Recent reports and EMN Ad-hoc queries are worth considering for this study, such as:

- Milieu Study on “Factual analysis of Member States Investors’ Schemes granting citizenship or residence to third-country nationals investing in the said Member State”
- European Parliament, Briefing on Acquisition and loss of citizenship in EU Member States, July 2018
- ‘Settling In’ 2018, Indicators of Immigrant Integration, OECD
- EMN Ad-hoc query 2019.23 on investor schemes (golden passports)
- Migrant integration policy index
- EMN Ad-Hoc Query 2015.669 on Exceptions to an obligation to be released from the old citizenship before acquiring a new one (2015)
- EMN Ad-hoc query 2012.402 on Dual Citizenship (2012)
- OECD study on Naturalisation and the Labour Market – Integration of Immigrants
- Fundamental Rights Agency, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey – main results, December 2017

To draft their contributions to this study, EMN NCPs should describe and analyse the respective national laws and policy documents regarding the acquisition of citizenship. Administrative handbooks as well as enquiry and research reports should also be used.

---

10 http://www.mipex.eu/access-nationality
6 AVAILABLE STATISTICS

As far as comparable statistics are concerned, Eurostat provides the following data sets for each EU Member State:

- **Residents who acquired citizenship as a share of resident non-citizens by former citizenship (EU / non-EU) and sex – annual data [migr_acqs].**
  
  **Note:** This type of data can provide an indication of how easy or difficult it is in the various Member States to acquire the citizenship of the country of residence.

- **Acquisition of citizenship by age group, sex and former citizenship (all former EU and non-EU citizenships) – annual data [migr_acq].**
  
  **Note:** This dataset is the most important one regarding quantitative analyses of the acquisition of citizenship in the Member States.

- **Acquisition of citizenship by age group, sex and level of human development of former citizenship – annual data [migr_acq1ctz].**
  
  **Note:** In this data set, former citizenships are grouped in accordance with position in human development index.

  **Note:** These data are not available for all EU Member States.

7 DEFINITIONS

According to the European Convention on Nationality, "nationality" means the legal bond between a person and a State and does not indicate the person’s ethnic origin.12 A case of the Court of Justice of the EU further defined nationality as "the special relationship of solidarity and good faith between [a Member State] and its nationals and also the reciprocity of rights and duties, which form the bedrock of the bond of nationality".13

"Multiple nationality" means the simultaneous possession of two or more nationalities by the same person.14 For the purpose of this study, the term "dual citizenship" is used.

According to the EMN glossary,15 the term "citizenship" is defined as "the particular legal bond between an individual and their State, acquired by birth or naturalisation, whether by declaration, choice, marriage or other means according to national legislation."

It is noted that, as per the EMN Glossary, in some Member States, a distinction is made between citizenship and nationality, whereas in the EU context, no distinction is made, and the two terms are considered interchangeable. Those countries which distinguish between citizenship and nationality, the term citizenship refers specifically to the legal rights and duties of nationals.

"Acquisition of citizenship" refers to "Any mode of becoming a national, i.e. by birth or at any time after birth, automatic or non-automatic, based on attribution, declaration, option or application".16

This study explores the acquisition of citizenship through naturalisation. "Naturalisation" means "any mode 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".17 As per a recent report published by the European Parliament, a distinction is made 'between ordinary naturalisation – when the primary grounds of acquisition of citizenship is a certain period of residence in the country, and special naturalisation – when the acquisition of citizenship is based on other considerations, such as family links, ethno-cultural connections or special contributions'.18 The first definition will be used for the purpose of this study, meaning that the emphasis is on the third-country nationals acquiring citizenship on the basis of an application process following a minimum legal residing period.

**Ius sanguinis** refers to "the determination of a person's nationality on the basis of the nationality of their parents (or one parent or one particular parent) at the time of the target person's birth and at the time of acquisition of nationality by the target person (the two points in time are different in cases of acquisition after birth)."19

In contrast to this, **ius soli** refers to "the principle that the nationality of a person is determined on the basis of their country of birth".20 The different categories of ius soli are defined as follows:21

---

12 Article 2(a), European Convention on Nationality, available at: https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c8


14 Article 2(b), European Convention on Nationality, available at: https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c8


- Unconditional ius soli: on the basis of birth. Citizenship is automatically granted to those born in the country, regardless of any other conditions;
- Conditional ius soli: on the basis of certain conditions, e.g. minimum period of residence in the country of the parents;
- Automatic double ius soli: on the basis of parental birth in the country. Children born in the country to foreign citizens can automatically acquire citizenship at birth if at least one of their parents was also born in the country;
- Conditional double ius soli: on the basis of certain conditions and parental birth in the country. Children born in the country to foreign citizens can acquire citizenship at birth if at least one of their parents was also born in the country under certain conditions, e.g. minimum period of residence for parents.

8 ADVISORY GROUP

- SE EMN NCP (Chair)
- COM (DG Migration & Home Affairs)
- AT EMN NCP
- BE EMN NCP
- CY EMN NCP
- EE EMN NCP
- EL EMN NCP
- FI EMN NCP
- FR EMN NCP
- HU EMN NCP
- IE EMN NCP
- LT EMN NCP
- LU EMN NCP
- LV EMN NCP
- SI EMN NCP
- SK EMN NCP
- Odysseus network expert
- ICF (EMN Service Provider)
- Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

9 TIMETABLE

The following tentative timetable has been proposed for the Study going forward:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 August</td>
<td>Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 December</td>
<td>Submission of national reports by EMN NCPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 January</td>
<td>First synthesis report to COM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 January</td>
<td>Deadline for comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 January</td>
<td>Circulation of the first SR to all NCPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 February</td>
<td>Deadline for comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>Publication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


10 Template for national contributions

The template provided below outlines the information that should be included in the national contributions of EMN NCPs to this Study. For national contributions, the total number of pages should not exceed 35-40 pages, including questions and excluding the Statistical Annex. A limit of 25-30 pages will also apply to the synthesis report, in order to ensure that it remains concise and accessible.
Common Template of EMN Study 2019
Pathways to citizenship for third-country nationals in EU Member States

National Contribution from FINLAND

Disclaimer: The following information has been provided primarily for the purpose of contributing to a synthesis report for this EMN study. The EMN NCP has provided information that is, to the best of its knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of the EMN NCPs' Member State.

Top-line factsheet [max. 1 page]

The top-line factsheet will serve as an overview of the national contribution introducing the study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policy-makers. Please add any innovative or visual presentations that can carry through into the synthesis report as possible infographics and visual elements.

Please provide a concise summary of the main findings of Sections 1-7:

The provisions on Finnish citizenship are laid down in the Finnish Constitution and, in more detail, in the Nationality Act. Finnish citizenship can be acquired on the basis of

- citizenship of a parent or adoptive parent (ius sanguinis)
- Finland as the country of birth (ius soli)
- parents’ marriage (legitimation)
- application (naturalisation)
- declaration.

Most Finnish citizens acquire their citizenship by ius sanguinis. The most common way for a third-country citizen to obtain Finnish citizenship is by application. Finnish citizenship was granted to 9,610 persons in 2018. A total of 11,415 decisions on citizenship applications and declarations were made, of which 84 per cent were positive and 16 per cent were negative. Similarly to previous years, inadequate language skills were the most common reason for rejection. Other common reasons included unclear identity, insufficient period of residence in Finland and failure to meet the integrity requirement.

Certain significant amendments have been made to the legislation pertaining to Finnish citizenship in recent years. In May 2019, an amendment entered into force that enables the revocation of a person’s Finnish citizenship if the person has committed certain crimes. The person must, however, have sufficiently close ties to another country. In April 2019, an amendment entered into force which facilitated the status of children born to female same-sex couples and removed the need for intra-family adoption. In July 2019, an amendment entered into force which restricted the eligibility of individuals with dual citizenship to certain military offices in the Finnish Defense Forces and offices in the Finish Border Guard. This amendment similarly restricted the eligibility of individuals with dual citizenship to study at the National Defense University in programmes that aim at an officer’s post or to be admitted to the basic course for border guards.

These amendments to the Nationality Act are largely the consequence of public debate which has, in recent years, mostly addressed matters of national security and crime control. The most heated topics included dual citizens in high-ranking offices, revoking citizenship because of criminal activity and promoting stricter preconditions of acquiring citizenship. The security debate has focused on the topics of Russian foreign policy, radical Islamist terrorism and a series of sexual offences that took place in Oulu in 2018 with suspects that had arrived in Finland as asylum-seekers.

The topic of citizenship has not been on the agenda in the present Government’s integration policy. The government’s Integration Programme for 2016-2019, for example, does not mention citizenship at all. In the history of Finnish integration policy, acquiring citizenship has usually been viewed as an important step in the integration process, not its final goal. Naturalisation, however, is rarely mentioned as a factor that would promote integration. This might be partly due to the fact that in Finland people with a continuous residence permit have many of the same rights as citizens.

The minor importance of citizenship in integration policy is also reflected in the practice that the state has not organised a ceremony for new citizens nor are new citizens required to publicly pledge allegiance to Finnish values or loyalty to the Finnish state. Information campaigns and other support measures for new citizens are, in all, very limited and usually self-organised by some cities.

Section 1: Legal and policy overview

Q1. With reference to international law, is your Member State a party to the:

a) 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness?
   ☒ Yes.
   ☐ No. Please explain why:

b) 1997 European Convention on Nationality?
   ☒ Yes.
   ☐ No. Please explain why:

Q2. Which are the main legal instruments covering the acquisition of citizenship for third-country nationals in your Member State? For example, is the acquisition of citizenship laid out in the constitution?

Please explain in the form of a short, succinct narrative, starting from general principles to application rules. Please provide references to the main relevant laws and (name and date).

Provisions on matters pertaining to citizenship are laid down in the Constitution, the Nationality Act (359/2003) and the Government Decree on Nationality (293/2013).

The Finnish Constitution23 no. 11.6.1999/731, Section 5, stipulates that Finnish citizenship is acquired at birth and through the citizenship of a child’s parents, as provided in more detail in the Act. Citizenship may also be granted, in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Act, by declaration or application. An individual’s Finnish citizenship can only be relinquished on the grounds laid down in the law and with the precondition that the person has been, or will be, granted the citizenship of another country.

The Constitution does not contain more detailed provisions on Finnish citizenship; instead, these are laid down separately in the Finnish Nationality Act (359/2003) which describes the purpose of the act as follows: This Act lays down provisions on the requirements for acquiring, retaining or losing Finnish citizenship and on the procedure for processing such matters.

The purpose of this Act is to regulate the acquisition and loss of Finnish citizenship taking account of the interests of both individuals and the State, to prevent and reduce statelessness and to observe and promote the principles of good governance and legal protection when processing and making decisions on matters of citizenship.24

Other key legislation relevant to citizenship or its acquisition include

- Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003), in which the framework of good governance and procedures in administrative matters is laid down (concerning, inter alia, the processing of citizenship applications);
- Aliens Act (301/2004) that lays down provisions on foreign citizens’ entry into and departure from Finland, as well as their residence and employment in the country;
- Passport Act (671/2006) that lays down the provisions on passports granted to Finnish citizens.

Q3. Have the laws and policies regarding third-country nationals’ acquisition of citizenship in your country undergone any major changes in recent years which significantly changed the procedures or requirements of the acquisition of citizenship 25? If yes, what have been the main drivers for the change? (e.g. EU / national case law, changes in other aspects of (national) migration law or policy etc.)

Kindly note that the response should refer to the target group of the study only.

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

Some major amendments have been made to the Finnish Nationality Act pertaining to the loss of citizenship, the status of children born to female same-sex couples and the status of individuals with dual citizenship.

On 26.04.2019 the Finnish Parliament passed a bill on the amendments to the Nationality Act26 in which it was proposed that the Nationality Act be amended so that Finnish citizenship could be revoked if an individual has committed certain crimes. These crimes include treason, high treason and terrorist offences that have been committed against the vital interests of Finland, and for which the maximum sentence is at least eight years of imprisonment and for which the punishment served is at least five years of imprisonment or a combination sentence. Citizenship could only be revoked for individuals who have citizenship of a second country and close, de facto ties to their other country of nationality. A Finnish citizen by birth could also lose his/her citizenship on the abovementioned grounds.

Behind these amendments was the Action Plan on Asylum Policies by Juha Sipilä’s Government, dated 8 December 2015.27 The Action Plan stated that the government will criminalise participation in the activities of a terrorist organisation in accordance with the UN and EU classification, as well as travelling abroad with the intention of committing a terrorist crime or financing such travel.

In 2018, the new Maternity Act was passed28 which ensures that a child born to a female same-sex couple through fertility treatments will be legally bound to both women from birth, and intra-family adoption will no longer be required. This also impacts the determination of the child’s citizenship if the non-birth mother is a foreign citizen.

The amendment of the Nationality Act required by the new Maternity Act was passed29. According to this amendment, a non-birth mother, who has been confirmed as a mother, will pass her Finnish citizenship on to the child and, if the child is born outside Finland, the child can acquire Finnish citizenship by declaration. The amendment entered into force on 1 April 2019.

The amendment placing restrictions on dual citizens being appointed to military posts entered into force in July 2019. The amendment is based on the Government Proposal 252/201830 putting forward amendments to Section 37 of the Act on the Defense Forces, Section 16 on the Act on National Defense University and sections 10 and 26 of the Act on the Administration of the Border Guard. These acts were consequently amended such that it would only be possible to appoint an individual to a military post in the Finnish Defense Forces if the individual does not hold a citizenship of or other ties to another state as laid down in the Security Clearance Act, which could jeopardise state security, public safety or Finnish foreign relations or the safety of military service.

The Act on National Defense University was amended to include the precondition that in order to be eligible to be admitted to studies leading to an officer’s post, the candidate must not hold a citizenship of or other ties to another state, as laid down in the Security Clearance Act, which could jeopardise state security, public safety or Finnish foreign relations or the safety of military service or the Border Guard.

Similar amendments were also made to the Act on the Administration of the Border Guard regarding military posts in the Border Guard and applicants admitted to the basic course for border guards.

25 In the framework of this study, the aim is to identify and assess potential changes that may have occurred in the past five years. Please limit your analysis to the 2014-2019 period. However, should important changes occurred in 2013, you can still mention those and explain the impact on the current rules in place.

Q4. Have there been any major debates or national issues about third-country nationals holding or acquiring the citizenship of your Member State in recent years? If so, have these debates included the acquisition also of EU citizenship rights (such as right to vote, right to free movement including labour mobility, consular protection and right to protection, etc.)? Please specify in which framework these debates were held (e.g. policy-makers, media, general public).

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

In recent years, the public debate concerning the amendments to the Nationality Act or preconditions for naturalisation have largely focused on matters of national security and crime control. The most heated topics included dual citizens in high-ranking public offices, revoking citizenship because of criminal offences and amendments to the preconditions for acquiring citizenship.

Dual citizens in public office

In 2014, President Sauli Niinistö requested a report on the need to reconsider the preconditions of dual citizenship31. The Committee on the new Public Servants Act discussed whether dual citizens should be barred from entry into certain public offices.

The final decision was that the Act would “focus on security questions regarding ties to foreign states on a more general level instead of issuing provisions on barring dual citizens from being appointed to certain public offices for which Finnish citizenship is a requirement.”32

The topic was reintroduced when Jussi Niinistö, Minister of Defense at the time, instituted a separate legislative project in the beginning of 2018 with the purpose of barring dual citizens from being appointed to certain military posts33. The Minister of Defense raised dual citizenship as a security risk and referred to the concept of the ‘fifth column’34. The fifth column refers to a secret group that operates within a state and against it in favour of another nation. In its statement, dated 27 March 2018, the Finnish Officers’ Union proposed that specifically individuals with Russian and Finnish dual citizenship should be barred from military posts35.

The topic has stirred debate on matters of principle of the basic rights of Finnish citizens and of national security. Restricting the right to dual citizenship to only certain nationalities has been criticised for breaching both the Finnish Constitution and the Non-discrimination Act. Even though restrictions made in the name of national security would be theoretically possible, it has been considered that this could have significant consequences for Finland’s status in international politics.

Losing citizenship due to criminal activity

The Action Plan on Asylum Policies by Juha Sipilä’s Government, dated 8 December 2015 stated that the government will criminalise participation in the activities of a terrorist organisation in accordance with the UN and EU classification, as well as travelling abroad with the intention of committing a terrorist crime or financing such travel.

On 5 December 2018, the Government submitted its proposal 272/2018 on the amendments to the Nationality Act to the Parliament. The proposal’s amendments to the Nationality Act put forwards that Finnish citizenship could be revoked as a consequence of committing certain crimes. These crimes include treason, high treason and terrorist offences that have been committed against the vital interests of Finland, and for which the maximum sentence is at least eight years of imprisonment and for which the punishment served is at least five years of imprisonment or a combination sentence.

Citizenship could only be revoked for individuals who have citizenship of a second country and close de facto ties to their other country of nationality. A Finnish citizen by birth could also lose his/her citizenship on the abovementioned grounds.

31 https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-7425788 (Page visited on 03/09/2019)
33 https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10060588 (Page visited on 03/09/2019)
35 https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10183651 (Page visited on 03/09/2019)
The proposal stirred heated public debate. In the parliamentary discussion, the proposal was suspected of being overly liberal and some MPs thought the preconditions for the loss of citizenship were too strict, nearly impossible. The parliamentary discussion also insisted that the effects of the law be clarified and it was asked if the amendments were merely cosmetic. 

Sexual offences in Oulu

In late 2018, a series of offences came to light in Oulu in which suspects, who had entered Finland as asylum-seekers or refugees, were accused of sexually abusing and raping young girls. The cases stirred heated public debate and Kai Mykkänen, Minister of the Interior at the time, brought up the idea that individuals who had committed severe sexual offences could have their citizenship revoked if certain conditions were met.

As a response to this, the Government published a list of measures for battling and preventing sexual offences and immigrant crime on 20 February 2019. The ministerial working groups on internal security and administration of justice and immigration prepared a set of measures under the supervision of Minister of the Interior, Kai Mykkänen. The list also included measures relevant to foreign citizens’ residence in Finland and the citizenship acquisition requirements:

- Measures will be taken to determine and prepare the necessary amendments to the Aliens Act and the Nationality Act and other actions to be taken in order to add the following conditions for the granting of citizenship:
  - Surveys will be conducted on the practices that other countries have adopted for citizenship tests, and a test suitable for Finland will be introduced (fundamental rules of society, values and attitudes regarding fundamental rights)
  - For persons of working age, several years of studies or work during their residence in Finland (taking into account health-related exceptions).
  - The required period of residence in Finland will be revised and extended, following the practices adopted in the countries of comparison. A longer than normal period of residence in Finland will be required in cases where the identity of the applicant is impossible to determine or cannot be reliably determined when granting the residence permit (missing documents, incentive to obtain and present identification from the country of origin).
  - When evaluating the conditions for granting citizenship, only periods of stay during which the applicant has held a valid residence permit will be counted towards the period of residence.

Q5. From a legal perspective, is there a distinction between nationality and citizenship in your Member State? If so, what are the differences?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

Similarly to English, the Finnish language makes a distinction between *kansalaisuus* (citizenship) and *kansallisuus* (nationality).

The word ‘kansalaisuus’ refers to an individual in the context of a state of which he/she is a member while being equipped with the rights of that state and society.

*Kansallisuus*, on the other hand, indicates that an individual is a member of a certain nation or people with ties to a certain linguistic and cultural group. *Kansallisuus* is used when referring to an ethnic group irrespective of the government in power in the region. This means that an individual with Finnish citizenship (kansalaisuus) can represent some other nationality (kansallisuus).

---

36 https://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/4414926/Lakiesitysta+kansalaisuuden+menettamisesta+terrorismin+takia+epailtiin+eduskunnassa+liian+suvaitsevaiseksi (Page visited on 03/09/2019)
38 https://vnk.fi/documents/10616/1144843/Seksuaalirikollisuuden%2Bennaltaehk%C3%A4%2Bja%2Btorjunta/315d9b46-b6ee-79af-d0c4-67a3b17ec0b6/Seksuaalirikollisuuden%2Bennaltaehk%C3%A4%2Bja%2Btorjunta.pdf
The glossary published by the Finnish Immigration Service determines the concepts of 40 \textit{kansalaisuus} and \textit{kansallisuus} as follows:

\textbf{Kansalaisuus}:
- swe medborgarskap
- en citizenship, nationality

\textit{Citizenship} means a legislative bond between an individual and a state determining the individual's status in the state as well as the basic rights and duties existing between the individual and the state.

\textbf{Kansallisuus}:
- swe nationalitet
- en (ethnic) nationality, ethnic origin

\textit{Ethnic background. Belonging to a specific nation or a group of people (e.g. Ingrian Finns, Kurds, Roma). Ethnic nationality has a different meaning than citizenship. For instance, a person of Kurdish ethnic origin may hold Finnish citizenship.}

These definitions are not, however, word-to-word equal to the definitions used in legislation in Finland.

In legislation, \textit{kansallisuus} is used in various contexts, for example when referring to the origin of a vehicle. It can, however, be used to refer to a person, and when it does, it incorporates the concept of citizenship. Section 87b of the Aliens Act, for example, defines nationality as one of the reasons for persecution using the following wording:

\textit{As reasons for persecution: nationality includes citizenship of a State, or lack thereof, and membership of a group determined by its cultural, ethnic or linguistic identity, common geographical or political origins, or its relationship with the population of another State}41;

Q6. Is the acquisition of citizenship in your Member State based on the \textit{ius sanguinis} or the \textit{ius soli} principle, on a mixture of these principles, or on other principles? \textit{Please check the appropriate box and explain.}

☒ \textit{ius sanguinis}.

☒ \textit{ius soli}. Please explain:
- ☐ Unconditional \textit{ius soli}.
- ☒ Conditional \textit{ius soli}.42
- ☐ Automatic double \textit{ius soli}. 43
- ☐ Conditional double \textit{ius soli}.44
- ☐ Mixed \textit{ius soli} and \textit{sanguinis}.
- ☒ Other.

The Finnish Nationality Act observes the principle of \textit{ius sanguinis} (citizenship by birth), supplemented by the \textit{ius soli} principle (citizenship by place of birth) utilised in order to prevent an individual being left stateless. Finnish citizenship can be based on the citizenship of a parent or adoptive parent, being born in Finland, the parents' marriage, or it can be obtained by an application or declaration.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \url{https://migri.fi/sanasto} (Page visited on 09/09/2019)
  \item \url{https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2004/20040301#L6P87b} (Page visited on 03/09/2019)
  \item This means that certain conditions have to be fulfilled, e.g. minimum period of residence in the country of the parents.
  \item This means that children born in the country to foreign citizens can automatically acquire citizenship at birth if at least one of their parents was also born in the country.
  \item This means that children born in the country to foreign citizens can acquire citizenship at birth if at least one of their parents was also born in the country under certain conditions, e.g. minimum period of residence for parents.
\end{itemize}
According to Section 9(1) of the Nationality Act, a child acquires Finnish citizenship by birth if:

1) the mother is a Finnish citizen;
2) the father is a Finnish citizen; and
   a) is married to the child’s mother; or
   b) the child is born in Finland and the man’s paternity of the child is established;
3) the father is dead, but was a Finnish citizen at the time of his death; and
   a) was married to the child’s mother; or
   b) the child is born in Finland and the man’s paternity of the child is established; or
4) the child is born in Finland and does not acquire the citizenship of any foreign State at birth, and does not even have a secondary right to acquire the citizenship of any other foreign State.

If the child has two mothers, as laid down in the Maternity Act (253/2018), a distinction is made between the mother who gave birth to the child and the non-birth mother, and the Nationality Act is applied as follows:

1) to the birth-mother of the child, the provisions of Section 1(1) referring to mother are applied (The person who has given birth to a child is the mother of the child\(^45\)).

2) to the mother referred to Section 3(1) of the Maternity Act, the provisions laid down in Section 1(2b) and (3b) on the father, is applied (child born in Finland and the motherhood of the non-birth mother is established).

Citizenship can be acquired on the basis of the ius soli principle in certain cases only: if the child is unable to acquire citizenship through the parents or the citizenship of the child or the child’s parents is unknown.

Provisions on such circumstances have been separately laid down in Section 9 and Section 12 of the Nationality Act:

Section 9

A child who is born in Finland acquires Finnish citizenship through the place of birth if his or her parents have refugee status in Finland or if they have otherwise been provided protection against the authorities of their State of nationality. An additional requirement is 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.

Section 12:

A foundling who is found in Finland is considered to be a Finnish citizen as long as he or she has not been established as a citizen of a foreign State. If the child has been established as a citizen of a foreign State only after he or she has reached the age of five, the child retains Finnish citizenship, however.

A child who was born in Finland to parents with unknown citizenship is considered a Finnish citizen as long as he or she has not been established as a citizen of a foreign State. The same applies to a child who was born out of wedlock to a mother with unknown citizenship. If the child has been established as a citizen of a foreign State only after he or she has reached the age of five, the child retains Finnish citizenship, however\(^46\).

The principle of ius origins means that naturalisation is granted based on an individual’s origins. In Finland, the principle of ius origins is applied first and foremost to the procedure of citizenship declaration that is primarily targeted to former Finnish citizens and their children. This procedure dates back to the new Nationality Act of 2003 that made it possible to have multiple citizenships. Those who had lost Finnish citizenship during the validity of the old legislation could regain it in a simplified procedure in comparison to that of the standard application process. After the 2011 amendment (entry into force on 01/09/2011), only former Finnish citizens and their children under the age of 18 in their care (co-applicants) can regain Finnish citizenship on declaration, i.e. after this amendment, the declaration procedure no longer applies to the children of former Finnish citizens.


Q7. In which modes can third-country nationals acquire the citizenship of your Member State? Please check all boxes that apply and briefly describe the main modalities. Kindly note that the response should refer to the target group of the study only. This question links to Statistical Annex 1.2.

☒ By ordinary naturalisation.

☐ By special naturalisation (e.g. based on considerations such as historical / ethno-cultural considerations, for political or other discretionary reasons, investment scheme). Please explain, briefly outlining the different types of special naturalisation available in your Member State:

☒ By declaration/notification.

☒ Other (e.g. reinstatement of former citizenship). Please explain, briefly outlining any other modes of naturalisation not covered above:

In addition to the application process, Finnish citizenship can be granted on declaration if the applicant meets certain criteria. The declaration procedure is faster, easier and less expensive for the applicant.

You can gain citizenship on declaration, if you are:

1. a child born abroad and out of wedlock to a Finnish man or a Finnish non-birth mother:
   A child who was born outside Finland on or after 1 June 2003 out of wedlock to a Finnish father or non-birth mother. The fatherhood or motherhood (of the non-birth mother) must have been established in Finland or abroad before the declaration is submitted.

2. Adopted child 12–17 years of age:
   An adopted child who has turned 12 with one of the adoptive parents being a Finnish citizen. An additional requirement is that the adoption decision must have been legally valid in Finland on or after 1 June 2003.

3. A former Finnish citizen:
   The applicant must be a former Finnish citizen. Finnish citizenship cannot be granted on declaration on the basis of the individual being a descendant of a former Finnish citizen.

4. Nordic citizen:
   A Nordic citizen over the age of 18, who has acquired Nordic citizenship by some manner other than application and who has lived in Finland for the past 5 years and who has not been sentenced to imprisonment during this time.

5. A young person, 18–22 years of age, who has lived in Finland for the required period of time:
   A person who is between the ages of 18 and 22 and who has not been sentenced to imprisonment and who has lived in Finland for a total of 10 years or has been born in Finland and lived in Finland for at least a total of 6 years.

Q8. What is the most common / frequent way from those mentioned above for third-country nationals to acquire citizenship in your Member State? This question links to Statistical Annex 1.2.

Third-country citizens usually acquire Finnish citizenship by application.

---

47 Please note that statistics on the number of third-country nationals who have acquired the citizenship of your country each year between 2014-2018, differentiated by the grounds of acquiring citizenship are requested in the Statistical Annex.
Section 2: Conditions and requirements for the acquisition of citizenship after birth through ordinary naturalisation

In cases where citizenship is not acquired at birth, what are the requirements and conditions that third-country nationals have to fulfil to obtain citizenship of your Member State? Please provide a brief overview of the conditions and requirements. Further details are to be provided in the subsequent questions.

Please note that the questions below only refer to cases when the primary grounds of acquisition of citizenship is through ordinary naturalisation (i.e. the legal process whereby a third-country national who is legally present on the territory of a Member State may acquire citizenship of an EU Member State. A new migrant is described as a third country national who does not have a pre-existing historical tie with the Member State (ethnic, family, historical). The conditions and requirements in place for second- or third-generation migrants and those migrants with special (e.g. ethnical or linguistic) ties to the country are not covered.

Section 2.1 Eligibility

Period of residence

Q9. After how many years or months of (interrupted/continuous) residence in your country can a third-country national acquire the citizenship of your Member State?

A requirement for becoming a Finnish citizen is that you live in Finland and that the total time you have lived in Finland (your period of residence) is long enough. Exceptions to the period of residence requirement may be made in individual cases. As a general rule, only legal residence in Finland counts towards your period of residence.

A person has lived in Finland long enough if they have lived in Finland for the last five years without interruption (continuous period of residence) or they have lived in Finland for a total of seven years after they turned 15 (accumulated period of residence), with the last two years without interruption.

The start date of a person’s period of residence depends on the permit they had when they moved to Finland. If they move away from Finland, their period of residence will be interrupted. If they had a temporary residence permit before they got a continuous residence permit, a half of the time they lived in Finland with a temporary residence permit is included in their period of residence. In such a case, they need to have had a continuous residence permit for at least one year immediately before the Finnish Immigration Service makes a decision on their citizenship application. The time they have lived in Finland with a temporary residence permit can only be included in their continuous period of residence.

Normal holiday trips are allowed during uninterrupted residence in Finland. For example, if a person spends three weeks or a month abroad during their summer holiday, their continuous period of residence is not interrupted. If they live abroad repeatedly or for long periods of time after they have moved to Finland, their period of residence may be interrupted.

Q9a: Is this period of residence based on legal residence (i.e. registration at the city hall or in a population registry) or is habitual residence (e.g. proved by house rental, school attendance, tax reports) in the Member State also counted?

☑ Legal residence required.
☐ Presence in the country sufficient
☐ No residence / presence in the Member State is required and citizenship is granted upon entry (e.g. investor schemes).
☐ Other.

Usually, periods of legal residence in Finland are accepted in the period of residence that is primarily calculated based on residence permits. The start date of the period of residence in Finland depends on the type of permit the applicant held when entering into Finland.

According to Section 14 of the Nationality Act, the period of residence begins:

1) on the date the applicant moves or returns to Finland if he or she has been or was before that granted a permit or right to move to Finland on a permanent basis;
2) on the date the first continuous residence permit is granted if the applicant, when entering Finland, does not have a permit which gives him or her the right to move into the country;

3) on the date an alien made an application for asylum or residence permit if he or she, on the basis of the application that has been lodged, was given asylum here or granted a residence permit on the basis of the need for protection; or

4) for a Nordic citizen, on the date he or she moves to Finland or registers his or her notice of removal depending on which of these was done later.

If the applicant’s identity has not been established, the approved period of residence starts only after he or she has given an account of his or her identity. The period the applicant has stayed in Finland before that, or part of it, may be approved as part of the period of residence if the applicant has shown initiative in establishing his or her identity, and similarly the period the applicant has stayed in the country as a minor, or part of it, if the fact that identity has not been established depends on the parent or guardian or is due to some other reason not depending on the applicant.

Q9b: Is this period of residence based on effective residence (i.e. physical presence for a regular and extended period in the territory) or is holding a residence permit for the required timeframe sufficient?

☑ Yes, physical presence necessary.
☐ No, holding a permit is sufficient.
☐ Other:

In addition to a valid residence permit, it is required that the applicant mostly resides in Finland. Even if the applicant holds a valid residence permit, but the applicant has not actually lived in Finland during the validity of the permit, the citizenship application is rejected.

Q9c: What proof (e.g. documentary evidence) is required to demonstrate that the minimum period of residence has been met?

Proving that the applicant has lived in Finland is based on the overall picture derived from the application. The applicant must have a domicile and home address in the population register. In addition to these, the documents on education and employment in Finland submitted by the applicant are considered evidence of Finland being the applicant’s primary place of residence.

Q9d: Can the period of residence be interrupted? If yes, how long can this interruption last?

☑ Yes.
☐ No
☐ Other:

As a rule, only the periods of stay during which the applicant has held a valid residence permit are accounted for in the period of residence. Gaps between residence permits could mean that the continuous period of residence is interrupted.

A permanent relocation outside Finland will interrupt the continuous period of residence. If the applicant moves back to Finland, the previous period of residence will be included in the total accumulated period of residence.

The continuous period of residence is also interrupted if the periods of absence occur so regularly and are so many that the applicant may be considered to have stayed, or stay, mostly outside Finland.

The following types of absences from Finland do not interrupt the continuous period of residence. Times of absence are considered part of the continuous period of residence with:

- short times of absence up to no more than one month,
- a maximum of six periods of absence exceeding one but not exceeding two months;
- up to two periods of absence exceeding two but not exceeding six months.

Temporary periods of absence exceeding six months but not exceeding a year are not included in the continuous period of residence nor do they interrupt it.
A period of absence exceeding one year will mean that the continuous period of residence is interrupted. The previous periods of residence in Finland are counted in the accumulated period of residence.

The period of residence is considered uninterrupted if the absence is due to a well-founded personal reason. This refers to a situation that is unexceptional and urgent, for example sudden illness abroad preventing the individual’s return to Finland. Taking care of one’s parents or grandparents in one’s former home country or a third country is not considered such well-founded personal reason.

If the continuous period of residence is interrupted, the previous periods of residence in Finland continue to be counted in the accumulated period of residence.

The accumulated period of residence can consist of several periods of stay in Finland. In this case, the applicant’s minimum period of residence in Finland is seven years, of which the most recent two years must be uninterrupted residence. The applicant is allowed, however, to stay abroad during the previous two years before the decision on the application is made, for periods of time that can be considered ordinary holidays. Spending up to four months abroad within a period of two years could be considered ordinary holidays.

The period of time that a person has lived in Finland on a temporary residence permit (so-called B permit) is disregarded in the period of residence.

Pre-existing legal residence status

Q10. What pre-existing legal residence status of the citizenship applicant is accepted?

Please also indicate for how long each of the given legal statuses has to be held in order for the third-country national to be able to acquire the citizenship of your country. For temporary permits, please indicate to what extent the number of years the third-country national possesses such a permit count towards being granted access to citizenship.

☒ Permanent residence permit. Number of years to get this permanent status and number of years necessary to hold it for citizenship acquisition:

In order to obtain a permanent residence permit, the applicant must have lived in Finland continuously for four years and held a continuous residence permit (so-called A permit). There is no distinction made between a permanent residence permit and an A permit when the period of residence is evaluated for the purpose of applying a citizenship, instead both residence permit types are equally accepted.

☐ Refugee status. Number of years:

According to Section 20 of the Nationality Act, an individual who has refugee status, or a residence permit based on the need for subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection in Finland or because he or she is involuntarily stateless, can be granted citizenship if he or she has lived in Finland for the past four years without interruptions, or a total of six years after turning 15 years of age, and the period of residence has been uninterrupted for the last two years.

☐ Temporary residence permit. Number of years:

If the applicant has held a temporary residence permit (B permit) before being granted a continuous residence permit, half of this period of residence will be recognised as a period of residence in Finland. A precondition for this would be that the applicant has held a continuous residence permit (A permit) for at least one year immediately prior to the time when the decision on the application on citizenship is made. The period of time that a person has lived in Finland on a temporary residence permit (so-called B permit) can only be recognised in the continuous period of residence.

☐ Other protection statuses. Number of years: see “Refugee status” above
Other status:

In the cases of spouses of Finnish citizens, or individuals who have refugee status or a residence permit in Finland based on the need for protection or who are involuntarily stateless, the Nationality Act lays down the requirement of residence of four years or a total of six years after turning 15 years of age, and that the period of residence has been uninterrupted for the last two years.

For former Finnish citizens and Nordic citizens, the required period of residence is two years. For co-applicants under 15 years of age (if a child’s application is submitted in connection with the custodian’s), or for children for whom the application has been submitted by a custodian, the child needs to have permanent residence and a home in Finland. There are no period of residence requirements as such. For co-applicants who are 15 years old or older, the required minimum period of residence is four years.

Exceptions to the requirements of residence can be made due to personal reasons pertaining to the applicant. According to Section 15(2) of the Nationality Act, a period of residence without a valid permit, or a part of it, may be approved as part of the period of residence owing to the applicant’s age or health or for some other similar reason if it may be considered reasonable from the applicant’s point of view.

Section 18 of the Nationality Act further states that exceptions may be made to the period of residence requirement, if

1) the applicant has strong ties with Finland on the basis of his or her long period of lawful residence in Finland or for some other similar reason; and

2) the applicant is and has been permanently resident and domiciled in Finland for the past two years without interruption.

It is furthermore required that:

1) it is unreasonably difficult to be engaged in permanent full-time work in Finland without Finnish citizenship;

2) the applicant has, through no fault of his or her own, been considered a Finnish citizen for a minimum of 10 years as a result of such a mistake made by a Finnish public authority which has led to a serious consequence related to the rights and obligations of a Finnish citizen; or

3) there are otherwise special and weighty reasons for making an exception to the requirement of the period of residence.

Section 2.2 Conditions

Language

Q11. Is knowledge of the national language(s) required for all naturalisation grounds, and if so, what is the required level?48

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

One of the requirements for obtaining Finnish citizenship is that the applicant has at least satisfactory language skills in one of the following:

1. Oral and written Finnish
2. Oral and written Swedish
3. Finnish sign language
4. Swedish sign language used in Finland

The level of the minimum requirement corresponds to level B1 of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR).

---

48 Please indicate the level according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages -CEFR (A1-C2)
Q11a. If yes, how is this proven or evaluated? What evidence is required, and which authority is responsible for assessment (e.g. ministry officials, language experts, private language institutions contracted by state, etc.)?

An applicant can demonstrate his or her command of Finnish in the citizenship application by attaching school or language test certificates. Separate provisions regarding these have been laid down in the Nationality Act. According to Section 17 of the Nationality Act, language skills can be demonstrated by completing one of the following:

1) Taking the national certificate of language proficiency (YKI) at level three (equivalent to level B1 of the CEFR).

The National certificates of language proficiency are granted by the Finnish National Agency for Education;

2) By obtaining the Civil service language proficiency certificate with at least satisfactory Finnish and Swedish skills.

The Civil service language proficiency certificate is a system for demonstrating the civil servants' command of an official language of Finland that is not their native language. However, the certificates issued can also be used to demonstrate the Finnish or Swedish skills required in order to obtain Finnish citizenship. The Civil service language proficiency certificates are granted by the Finnish National Agency for Education;

3) Certificate of basic education with Finnish or Swedish as native language or second language.

The certificate must indicate a passing grade in Finnish or Swedish as the native language or second language;

4) Certificate of upper secondary education with Finnish or Swedish as native language or second language;

5) Matriculation examination in Finnish or Swedish with a passing grade of the Finnish or Swedish language as native language or second language;

6) Vocational upper secondary qualification taken in Finnish or Swedish;

7) Vocational qualification or specialist vocational qualification taken in Finnish or Swedish;

8) Completion of the mandatory Finnish or Swedish courses in a university or polytechnic degree or a passed maturity test completed in Finnish or Swedish.

Q11b. If your Member State uses a language test, has this test ever been evaluated, e.g. has the test led to better knowledge of the national language(s)?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

There are several alternatives for demonstrating one’s language skills in the citizenship application, but most applicants for Finnish citizenship take the National certificates of language proficiency (YKI) exam to demonstrate that they possess the required B1 (YKI level 3) level Finnish skills.

YKI is the Finnish representative of intermediate level language qualifications in ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe, www.alte.org). The activities of ALTE include helping its members to develop the quality degree of their tests, and it also audits the tests of its members. The intermediate YKI test has been audited three times. Last audit was completed in the autumn of 2019. The process is comprehensively reviewed in connection with each audit.

The Swedish YKI test is prepared and carried out in accordance with the procedure of the Finnish test, so they are of equivalent quality. There has been no international audit performed on the Swedish test, however, as only the Finnish YKI test is a member of ALTE.

It has been deemed difficult to report and verify the impacts that YKI has. The Centre for Applied Language Studies and the Finnish National Agency for Education are the administrators of the YKI tests and they have written two publications (in the late 1990s and in connection with YKI’s 20th anniversary in 2014) that explored the examination and analysed its impacts from several viewpoints and by its several interest groups. The results of the YKI tests have been used for different research projects on language learning and competence, and the results have been compiled into an open corpus that is available for researchers. YKI and its personnel also participate in various research projects that address language skills as well as projects that look at the questions of immigration and immigrant integration.
The importance of statistics, for example, has been developed significantly in language testing as a result of the audits. In addition to quality observations, statistics methods are employed to monitor the functions relevant to the assessment process, such as the difficulty level of the assignments and the test as a whole and how well the tests can tell apart the more talented and poorer learners. The assessors’ conduct is also monitored for each test in order to prevent different views on assessment from impacting the grade of the learner. There are also different types of training courses and other development projects that are used to develop the testing system, and they all seek to ensure that YKI is a high-quality and reliable test system. The employees involved in the development of the National certificate of language proficiency are also actively involved in the work of ALTE, which helps to keep up with language assessment trends across Europe.

The same preparation guidelines are used for all YKI tests, and they are all based on the same skill descriptors linked to the European framework, so the tests in different languages are, in principle, comparable to each other. The test results indicate that the Finnish and Swedish tests are quite similar to each other.

It has been deemed difficult to assess the impacts that the tests have on language-learning, but it is presumed that a test always effects both teaching and learning: what is tested/required in the test is also what will be taught and what people want to learn. YKI preparatory courses have been organised in connection with integration courses around Finland. The website kotisuomessa.fi, was designed several years ago to help in self-study efforts and it is based on the YKI themes and situations of language use. The Centre for Applied Language Studies also trains teachers with its resources.

Citizenship tests and commitments

Q12. Are citizenship applicants required to pass a citizenship or integration test for all naturalisation grounds? Please note that this could also include oral interviews.

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

Q12a. If yes, has the citizenship test ever been evaluated?

☐ Yes.
☐ No.
N/A

Q13. Is the applicant required to legally or symbolically commit to certain values or norms (such as human rights, democracy, quality and the rule of law) for all naturalisation grounds and if so, which ones?

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

Q14. Are applicants required to pledge formally allegiance to your Member State (e.g. oath of allegiance?) If yes, does this apply to all naturalisation grounds? Please explain the differences.

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

49 E-mail interview with University of Jyväskylä’s Centre for Applied Language Studies, 21/08/2019
Good conduct

Q15. Is the third-country national expected to fulfil any requirements regarding good conduct (e.g. clean criminal record, fulfilment of civic requirements such as payment of taxes), public order, public health and if so, which ones?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

One of the requirements for obtaining citizenship is integrity. Integrity means that the applicant has not committed crimes and there are no restraining orders imposed on the applicant. Petty offences for which a fixed fine has been imposed are not an obstacle to obtaining citizenship.

Crimes and restraining orders are not absolute obstacles to grant citizenship to an applicant. It is possible to make exceptions to the integrity requirement, if it is considered reasonable in the light of the overall assessment. The overall assessment takes into account the following matters, inter alia:

- the time passed since the crimes were committed
- the severity of the punishment
- the nature of the crime
- whether the offences have been recurring

Based on the assessment, a waiting time can be determined during which the applicant shall not be naturalised without valid reasons. The waiting time can range from a minimum of one year to up to seven years, starting from the date the sentence that was imposed as unconditional imprisonment has been served. The waiting time after a conditional prison sentence, community service, juvenile punishment and fines can vary from one to three years from the date the offence was committed.

The waiting time can also be applied to crimes for which the court has waived the punishment. In the determination of the waiting time, it must also be taken into account whether the applicant has committed recurring offences.

It is an additional requirement of issuing citizenship that the applicant has settled any fees chargeable under public law. This means that the applicant does not have any overdue

- taxes
- fines
- study loans with state guarantee
- hospital fees
- child support payments.

If the applicant has failed to take care of these obligations, it will be assessed whether the applicant’s negligence is material in nature. In such a case, attention will be paid to whether the applicant has attempted to make the payments to the best of their ability, and whether the applicant has, for example, committed to a payment schedule and kept to it. Significantly neglecting child support payments, taxes or fines can mean an applicant will not be granted citizenship.

Q15a. If yes, what proof (e.g. documentary evidence) is required to demonstrate that the criteria for good conduct has been met?

The integrity of an applicant will be determined by performing checks in the criminal record, with the prosecutor and the courts. Determining whether the applicant has settled his or her debts chargeable under public law will take place by performing checks in the tax registry during the processing of the application and, if and when necessary, also with the enforcement authority (in the case of public debts).

Economic resources

Q16. Is the applicant’s economic/financial situation or standard of living taken into account and if so, how (e.g. a minimum income level and assets)? Does this apply to all naturalisation grounds? Please explain the differences.

☒ Yes.
☐ No.
According to Section 13 of the Nationality Act, one of the preconditions of naturalisation is that when the decision on the citizenship application is made, the applicant can provide reliable records of income.

It is required that the applicant can reliably prove where the applicant has received his/her income for the entire period of residence that is a requirement for obtaining citizenship. The applicant must record all sources of income in the application. The income requirement applies to all applicants.

Q16a. If yes, what proof (e.g. documentary evidence) is required to demonstrate that the minimum income level / assets have been met?

An applicant can receive income from several sources, including employment, business activities or benefits granted by the state.

If the income is based on employment, the applicant must enclose employment certificates from the current and previous employers (for the required period of residence). Usually applicants enclose copies of employment contracts and payslips.

If the applicant’s income is based on business activities, the following documents must be enclosed in the application:

- extract from the Register of Companies dated less than six months ago
- profit and loss account and balance sheet for the most recent financial period
- certificate from the accounting firm on wages paid or takings into private use

If the applicant’s income is based on benefits received from the State, the applicant must only indicate in the application the types of benefits received. The Finnish Immigration Service can check information regarding the paid benefits directly from the Social Insurance Institution.

If there are other sources of income, separate documents will be requested on a case-to-case basis.

Q17. Is the third-country national’s housing situation taken into account?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

The applicant does not necessarily have to have their own apartment, but they must have had a domicile in the population register and a permanent address in Finland for the entire required period of residence. If there are gaps in an applicant’s home address data in the population register, the applicant must provide the Finnish Immigration Service an account of these. This is to ensure that Finland has been the applicant’s primary place of residence for the required period of residence.

Q17a: If yes, what proof (e.g. documentary evidence) is required to demonstrate that any housing requirements have been met?

If the applicant’s address data is not recorded in the population register, they must provide written documents for the Finnish Immigration Service of their residence, such as a lease contract, extract from the register of occupants, or a statement by the occupant of the residence.

Others

Q18. Are there any other requirements not listed above?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

The Nationality Act further states that the applicant must be of age when the application is submitted. In Finland, an individual comes of age when he/she turns 18.

According to Section 6(1) of the Nationality Act, the applicant’s identity must be reliably established before he/she can obtain Finnish citizenship. The requirement of establishing an applicant’s identity applies to all citizenship decisions irrespective of the basis of the citizenship application. Other requirements for acquiring citizenship will not be reviewed and the application will be rejected, if the applicant’s identity cannot be reliably established.
In this process, the Finnish Immigration Service will review if there are any inconsistencies in the applicant’s personal data. The applicant can provide proof of their identity by presenting reliable documents (i.e. passport) or by giving a reliable account in another manner of such details as name, date of birth, citizenship and family relations. The information that the applicant has previously provided on his/her identity will be taken into account in the process of establishing his/her identity.

The requirement of established identity is connected to the calculation of the required period of residence as laid down in the Nationality Act. According to Section 15(2) of the Nationality Act, if the applicant’s identity has not been established, the approved period of residence cannot start before the applicant produces an account of his/her identity. The provision states that the period the applicant has resided in Finland before that may be approved as part of the period of residence if the applicant has shown initiative in establishing his or her identity.

Furthermore, as laid down in Section 13 of the Nationality Act, an individual may not be naturalised if the main purpose of acquiring citizenship is to take advantage of the benefits related to Finnish citizenship without aiming to settle in Finland.

Section 2.3 Security

Q19. Are there any specific exclusion criteria (e.g. threats to national security and public order)?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

Section 13 similarly states that no one may be naturalised, even if he or she would meet the requirements for naturalisation, if there are well-founded reasons for suspecting that the naturalisation will jeopardise the security of the State or public order or if the naturalisation conflicts with the best interests of the State for some other reason on the basis of an overall consideration of the applicant’s situation.

If considered necessary, the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (SUPO), or National Bureau of Investigation, will submit a rejection statement on the citizenship application, if it is considered that the naturalisation of the applicant will jeopardise the security or best interests of the state, as laid down in Section 13 of the Nationality Act.

Section 2.4 Specific groups of third-country nationals

Q20. Are the above-mentioned requirements different for specific groups of third-country nationals, such as the groups listed below. For each group, please briefly explain the main differences that apply:

a. Refugees
b. Other beneficiaries of international protection statuses
c. Specific categories of legal migrants
d. Other groups that are significantly represented in your Member State, incl. stateless persons

e. 

Q20a. Refugees

For individuals who have received international protection, exceptions are granted on the language skill requirement. In accordance with Section 18(b) of the Nationality Act, a foreign national can be granted citizenship without meeting the language skill requirement, if the applicant is 65 years of age or older and has refugee status or a residence permit based on the need for subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection in Finland. Similarly, there are some exceptions to the period of residence requirement (cf. Q10).

Q20b. Other beneficiaries of international protection statuses

See Q20a above
Q20c. Specific categories of legal migrants e.g. people with disabilities or people in old age.

According to Section 18(b) of the Nationality Act, an individual who is illiterate or 65 years of age or older, and who has been granted a residence permit based on reasons other than international protection, can be granted an exception to the language skill requirement, if the applicant can understand Finnish or Swedish and knows the basic oral skills of Finnish and has participated in Finnish or Swedish language courses actively. An applicant’s illiteracy is proved by a certificate issued by the applicant’s Finnish or Swedish teacher.

It is also possible to make exceptions to the language skill requirement, if the applicant is unable to meet the requirement due to health reasons, sensory handicap or a speech defect. In order to prove this, the applicant must provide the Finnish Immigration Service a medical certificate on his/her health and its impacts on language acquisition. The Finnish Immigration Service will make the decision based on the medical certificates provided and the overall assessment. In some cases, these reasons can also be applied to exempt an applicant from the residence period requirement (see Q10).

Q20d. Other groups that are significantly represented in your Member State (e.g. stateless persons, minors, investors, citizens of neighbouring countries).

See Q10 above

For Nordic citizens, the required period of residence is shorter. According to Section 21 of the Nationality Act, a citizen of Iceland, Norway, Sweden or Denmark may be granted Finnish citizenship if the applicant is and has been permanently resident and domiciled in Finland for the past two years without interruption.
Section 3: Procedural aspects for the acquisition of citizenship in the Member State

Please note that, consistent with Section 2, the questions below again only refer to cases when the primary grounds of acquisition of citizenship is through naturalisation based on a minimum period of residence in the country (i.e. ‘ordinary naturalisation’, not the conditions and requirements in place for second- or third-generation migrants and those migrants with special (e.g. ethnical or linguistic) ties to the country).

Q21. Please briefly describe the procedure in place for third-country nationals to obtain citizenship through ordinary naturalisation.

Before applying for citizenship, however, the applicant must ensure that they meet the other requirements of citizenship. The preconditions should be met at the time of submitting the application. The applicant must also ensure that they have all the attachments needed for the application and have them legalised, if necessary.

After this, the applicant must fill out the citizenship application personally. An application can be completed online on the Enter Finland service maintained by the Finnish Immigration Service or by filling out a paper form that must be submitted to a Finnish Immigration Service’s customer service point. The electronic application is paid on the Enter Finland service, and the application fee is paid at the customer service point if a paper form is used.

After filling out the form, the applicant must pay a visit to a customer service point of the Finnish Immigration Service to be identified and present the original attachments. Only after this, the citizenship application is considered filed and is moved to the processing queue.

The Finnish Immigration Service will process the application in its turn in the queue and contact the applicant for more information on matters relevant to the application or if supplementary attachments are needed.

After the Finnish Immigration Service has made a decision in the matter, it will inform the applicant. If the applicant has submitted an application on paper, he/she will receive the decision by mail. If the applicant has submitted an application on the Enter Finland service, he/she will receive the decision in his/her user account on Enter Finland. The information that an applicant has acquired Finnish citizenship will be immediately transferred to the population register.

If the applicant’s application is rejected, appeal instructions will be enclosed in the decision. Appeals are to be lodged at the Administrative Court.

Q21a. Are children automatically naturalised once their parents are granted citizenship?

☑ No.

A child can acquire Finnish citizenship in connection with a custodian’s citizenship application as a co-applicant, but a separate application must be filled and naturalisation does not take place automatically.

Children between 12 and 14 are interviewed to learn their views about naturalisation. The consent of children between the ages of 15 and 17 is required in order for them to be naturalised.

Consent from both custodians is required to naturalise a child.

Q22. What public authorities/agencies are involved in procedures for third-country nationals’ acquisition of the citizenship of your Member State?

Please mention and describe their roles at each step of the process in order to identify the authorities by which the application is introduced and those taking the decisions.

The Finnish Immigration Service will decide on the acquisition, retention and loss of Finnish citizenship and on the determination of citizenship status.

In Finland, citizenship applications and declarations are submitted to a Finnish Immigration Services’ customer service point. Lodging a citizenship process abroad takes place in a Finnish mission.
In some cases, the local registry office will enter the information on the acquisition, retention and loss of Finnish citizenship in the population register automatically.

The appeals based on decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service are processed at the Administrative Courts that also give their rulings in these cases.

The Finnish Security and Intelligence Service also reviews all citizenship applications and gives its statements on single applications, if deemed necessary.

A citizenship application process involves several authorities in many ways.

The Government Decree on Nationality (293/2013), Section 6, states that it is a joint decision of the Finnish Immigration Service, Population Register Centre, local registry offices, the police, the Defense Command, Civilian Service Centre, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Finnish missions how matter pertaining to Finnish citizenship are harmonised, and how cooperation and exchange of information shall take place.50

According to Section 46 of the Nationality Act, it is possible to request a statement by the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, National Bureau of Investigation, the Defense Command or the social services authority with relevant information. The Finnish Immigration Service, Finnish Security and Intelligence Service or National Bureau of Investigation can request the applicant to provide information needed in order to process the application or declaration. These authorities must also interview the applicant, if possible. If the application or declaration has been lodged abroad, the Finnish mission can invite the applicant to provide information needed for the processing of the matter on the request of the Finnish Immigration Service.

Q23. Are these procedures digitised? Can applications for citizenship be made online?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

It is possible to fill out the application and pay the application fee online on the Enter Finland service offered by the Finnish Immigration Services. The applicant will then attach scanned copies of the mandatory attachments to the electronic application. The applicant must, however, visit a customer service point of the Finnish Immigration Services personally to provide proof of his/her identity and to present the originals of the documents that were appended to the online application. The application will be processed and a decision will be made in the electronic case management system (UMA) of the Finnish Immigration Service, and the application and its attachments will be saved in an electronic archive.

Q24. What documentation is required in order to submit the application (e.g. passport, birth certificate) (in addition to the evidence reported to meet the conditions set out in Section 2)?

The following documents are listed as mandatory attachments to the citizenship application:

- Valid passport or other document of identity, if the applicant does not have a passport
- Certificate of language skills
- Account of income at present and in the past. Attachments will not have to be presented for the information that the Finnish Immigration Service will receive directly from the Tax Authority or the authority that has granted the benefit.

The applicant could be asked for additional documents on a case-by-case basis.

Q25. What is the legally prescribed maximum time period for the procedure, if applicable, and how long do procedures take in practice? If the different stages of the procedure have maximum time periods (e.g., registration, application, etc.) please differentiate. Are certain types of cases prioritised or fast-tracked, and if so, which ones?

The estimated processing time of a citizenship application is 5–9 months (2019). The processing time of a single application can, however, vary due to several factors. A criminal case in which the applicant is a suspect is one of the most common factors affecting the processing time. An application can also be delayed because the attachments need to be supplemented or reviewed in more detail, for example authenticity checks performed by the police. The processing of an application can similarly be delayed, if the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (SUPO) or the National Bureau of Investigation requests that the application be submitted to them for a round of statements before the Finnish Immigration Service makes its decision.

The applicant can request that the application be expedited, but this takes place very rarely and there must be very weighty reasons for this. The applications of people over the age of 70 are always processed in an expedited procedure.

Q26. **What are the costs for the application for citizenship (in €)?** Please note that this excludes costs for the translation of documents, trainings for language proficiency, etc. Please specify whether different costs apply to different grounds.

The fee for an electronic application is 380 euros and for a paper application 480 euros (in 2019).

The fee for an electronic citizenship declaration is 150 euros and for a paper declaration 200 euros (in 2019).

Q27. **Are there any other evidence requirements to be fulfilled for a final decision to be taken on the citizenship application (in addition to those set out above, e.g. language certificate)?**

See the responses above.

Q28. **To what extent is discretion an element of the procedure/decision-making process? Is there absolute discretion or conditional discretion?**

The citizenship applications are processed in compliance with the preconditions of naturalisation that are laid down in the Nationality Act and their application instructions.

If the applicant meets the minimum requirements laid down in legislation, the Finnish Immigration Service must grant the citizenship to the applicant. The primary task of the Finnish Immigration Service is to review that the preconditions of naturalisation are met, and it does not possess any authority in the matter above what is laid down in the law. The Immigration Service can, however, make exceptions to the preconditions of naturalisation at its own discretion within the framework laid down in the law.

The application of the law is based on the internal instructions of the Finnish Immigration Service and the recommendations issued by the Ministry of the Interior. The interpretation of the law is further shaped by the rulings that the administrative courts (including the Supreme Administrative Court) issue for the appeals.

Furthermore, it is possible that an applicant who meets the requirements of citizenship is not issued citizenship, if a prohibition against naturalisation is applied to the applicant.

Q29. **What challenges if any have been experienced regarding the verification of the identity of naturalisation applicants?**

The situations connected to an unestablished identity can vary a great deal. Sometimes the applicant is unable to provide sufficient documentary evidence of his/her identity. The documents of people in the scope of international protection, in particular, are sometimes greatly deficient, because they cannot contact the authorities of their country of origin in order to obtain the documents in question due to the protective measures. The documents issued by some states cannot be deemed reliable or there are no competent authorities in these countries to issue such documents.

Falsified documents in general are a recurring issue when applications are processed. If there is reason to suspect that a document presented by an applicant is falsified or fake, it must be sent to the National Bureau of Investigation’s Forensic Laboratory for an authenticity check. The Finnish Border Guard also carries out authenticity checks when needed.

An applicant who does not have any of the required documents is actually a greater challenge than falsified documents. If documents are not available, the personal data provided by the applicant or his/her custodian are usually accepted. If no alternatives exist, personal information thus created can be usually considered reliable, and their identity established. In these cases, the Finnish practice is more lenient from an applicant’s viewpoint than in Sweden, for example, where a longer period of residence – eight years – is a requirement for applicants without documents, and it must still be possible to identify them with at least some degree of certainty.

In addition to the possibility that the documents needed for establishing an applicant’s identity are incomplete, it is also possible that there are inconsistencies in the information provided by the applicant. It is possible that the

---

51 Absolute discretion means that the state may leave authorities absolute discretion to grant naturalisation to applicants, whether or not they meet the legal requirements. Conditional discretion means authorities only have limited grounds to reject applicants who meet the legal requirements.
personal information that was initially submitted, or a part thereof, is later retracted without any valid reason. It can also happen that personal information that was initially considered reliable will in fact turn out to be incorrect as the Finnish Immigration Service gets access to a reliable document that includes the personal information of an applicant.

A verified identity is an absolute requirement of citizenship, but if the establishment is not possible, it could still be that obtaining citizenship is possible. Naturalisation is possible in accordance with Section 6(3) of the Nationality Act, even though an applicant has earlier used more than one identity or it has been impossible to reliably verify his or her identity. According to the aforementioned Section 6(3), that states that if an alien has used an identity registered in the population information system for at least ten years, even though he or she had earlier used more than one identities, his or her identity is considered to be established.

The objective of this provision is to prevent an unreasonable situation in which an individual could never obtain Finnish citizenship due to his/her identity not being reliably established.

There have been cases in which the applicant has, immediately after acquiring citizenship, visited the local registry office and announced someone else’s personal information as their own. In these cases the authorities have applied Section 33 of the Nationality Act which states that if a person has provided such false or misleading information on his or her person or other false or misleading information, the knowledge of which would have resulted in refusing Finnish citizenship, or withheld such a relevant circumstance which would have had the same effect, a decision may be made to the effect that the person loses the Finnish citizenship which he or she has acquired on application or by declaration.

The following decision recorded in a Supreme Court yearbook is a typical example of the challenges that arise when the identity of an applicant is being established.

KHO:2014:105 (16/06/2014)52

The question in the case concerns the reliable establishment of identity. A Finnish citizenship applicant had entered Finland in 2014 as an asylum-seeker. He had been previously registered in Greece and Norway. The dates of birth he had provided to the authorities in Greece, Norway and Finland did not match. The Finnish Immigration Service was of the view that the individual’s identity was not reliably established, because the passport he presented, issued in 2012 by the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo, could not be considered reliable documentary evidence and he had used different personal information in Greece and Norway. The Finnish Immigration Service did not grant Finnish citizenship to the applicant, because his identity could not be considered to be reliably established. The Administrative Court, however, was of the view that the documentary evidence presented by the party was reliable and it was deemed that he had provided information of this name and date of birth to an extent that can be reasonably required of him. The Administrative Court ruled that the party’s identity had been reliably established. The Supreme Administrative Court’s decision, however, agreed with the original decision by the Finnish Immigration Service and considered that no reliable evidence had been presented on the identity of the party involved. Inconsistent information had been received of his date of birth, and there was little information of his background and past available by other means. Thus, based on an overall assessment, the party’s identity could not be considered reliably established in accordance with Section 6, subsections 1 and 2 of the Nationality Act.

Q30. Is there a right of appeal or basis for legal challenge if citizenship is refused? If yes, do the authorities have to provide information about the grounds for refusal?

☑ Yes.
☐ No.

An applicant has the right to lodge an appeal at the Administrative Court if the Finnish Immigration Service rejects their application. The Administrative Court can either reject the appeal or return the matter to the Finnish Immigration Service for new processing. If the Administrative Court rejects the appeal by the applicant, the applicant can take the additional step of appealing to the Supreme Administrative Court. The Supreme Administrative Court will then assess whether it will grant the applicant a leave of appeal. If a leave of appeal is granted, the matter of the appellant will be heard in the Supreme Administrative Court. The Supreme Administrative Court will then decide whether the case will be returned to the Finnish Immigration Service for new processing.

When the Finnish Immigration Service rejects a citizenship application, the decision usually contains detailed reasons for the rejection, and the applicant does not usually have to separately request to be informed of the grounds of the rejection.

**Q31. What are the most common grounds for a negative citizenship application decision? If possible, please list the top 5 reasons. Grounds could include insufficient language skills, insufficient period of residence, criminal record, unestablished identity.**

According to the 2018 statistics, the most common reasons behind rejections were the following (in the order of number of occurrences)\(^{53}\):

1. Inadequate language skills
2. Identity not established
3. Inadequate period of residence
4. Integrity requirement failed
5. Uncertain income

The 2019 statistics for the period of time from 1 January to 29 August indicate the same order of reasons. There has been slight variation in the order from year to year, but these five reasons continue to be the most common ones for having a citizenship application rejected.

**Q32. Does your Member State organise a citizenship ceremony? If yes, is participation in such a ceremony mandatory or voluntary?**

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

Usually, there have been no ceremonies organised for new Finnish citizens, but in recent years, there has been rising interest in such a ceremony. National ceremonies are not organised for all new Finnish citizens, but there are local exceptions. Some municipalities or regions (the Turku region as an example) have long traditions for organising an annual ceremony for the region’s new Finnish citizens to celebrate their naturalisation.

The municipalities in the Turku area celebrated their new Finnish citizens at the Turku Volunteer Fire Brigade building on 10 April 2018. Certificates of honour were handed out in the event for the Year’s New Citizen of Turku and Multicultural Act 2018. All the new Finnish citizens in the Turku region, together with their families, were invited to the ceremony as well as people engaged in multicultural work\(^{54}\).

The City of Helsinki organised a ceremony for new Finnish citizens for the first time in September 2017. All Helsinki residents who had received their citizenship in 2016 and who were over 18 years of age were invited. According to the City of Helsinki, having a citizenship ceremony is one way of encouraging active citizenship, which is the purpose of Helsinki’s new Participation and Interaction Model\(^{55}\). Finland celebrated a centennial of independence in 2017. In the January of the anniversary year, the Ministry of the Interior, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the Finnish Immigration Service sent all the municipalities in Finland a recommendation\(^{56}\) to acknowledge new Finnish citizens in the municipalities in connection with the celebrations of Finland’s 100 years of independence.

The municipalities were encouraged to organise events for the new citizens and to feel free to choose the nature of the event themselves; it could be anything from having coffee to organising a seminar or a game of pesäpallo, the Finnish national sport with teams consisting of “old” and “new” Finns – whatever felt right for them.

The recommendation letter emphasised the idea of new encounters in the spirit of the theme of the Finnish 100-year-anniversary, “Together”: getting to know the new citizens, making them locally visible and sharing a moment to reflect on what it means to be Finnish today.

---

\(^{53}\) Finnish Immigration Service Nationality Unit 29/08/2019


The Finnish Immigration Service requested data from the Population Register Centre of all the residents by municipality who had received Finnish citizenship in 2016 and who were over 18 years of age.

In addition to this, the Finnish Immigration Service sent all of the applicants who were granted citizenship a personalised letter to congratulate them on Finnish citizenship in 2017.

**Support provided during the application process**

**Q33.** Does your Member State provide information and/or encourages third-country nationals to consider applying for citizenship?

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

There has been no nationwide project to promote applications for Finnish citizenship in the recent past.

In September 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service sent information cards to the target group of young people who had been living in Finland for a long time. The purpose was to advertise the procedure of gaining citizenship on declaration. A person who is between the ages of 18 and 22 and who has not been sentenced to imprisonment and who has lived in Finland for a total of 10 years or who has been born in Finland and lived in Finland for at least 6 years in all, can apply for citizenship in a declaration process. It was the purpose of the information cards to spread awareness among young people of the fact that those who meet the criteria of the declaration procedure are entitled to Finnish citizenship.

This group was selected as the target group for the test as it was a relatively limited group, which made it a good test group. It was also thought that the members of this group are well-integrated in Finland. Because the requirements include at least 10 years’ period of residence in Finland (or six years, if the individual was born in Finland), and the declaration must be made when the applicant is between 18 and 22 years old, the applicants have practically lived their whole life, or at least most of it, in Finland, have obtained Finnish basic education, etc.

The Finnish Immigration Service also sends an advance warning when a citizen is about to lose their citizenship: If an individual is a citizen of both Finland and another state, they might in some circumstances lose their Finnish citizenship automatically when they turn 22. The Finnish Immigration Service notifies the person that they face the risk of losing their citizenship and the opportunity to retain their citizenship to Finnish citizens who have not had a domicile in Finland for at least seven years altogether. These notifications are sent annually to the individuals who will turn 18 in the same year and whose addresses are available in the population register.

**Q34.** Is governmental support provided to applicants during the application process? Have any good practices been identified in your Member State?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

An applicant can request additional information on the application process by contacting the Finnish Immigration Service’s customer service directly by calling, e-mail or via a chatbot.

The Finnish Immigration Service introduced the Kamu chatbot service in May 2018. It is a tool with which applicants can receive quick answers to simple questions. The chatbot was introduced because, after the number of customer inquiries quickly increased, the Finnish Immigration Service needed to find new ways to answer as many questions as possible. As many of the inquiries were asked frequently, an idea came up to have a chatbot answer the FAQ so that the Migri customer service staff could concentrate on the more complex questions in which their expertise is needed. If the chatbot cannot answer a question, the question is forwarded to a human employee.

---

57 E-mail interview with the Citizenship Unit of the Finnish Immigration Services, 04/09/2019
58 For the purpose of this study, only support under the control of the state should be included here (e.g. websites, telephone hotline), i.e. support by NGOs or private service providers is excluded unless contracted by the state.
The information services operated by the cities, such as the services Helsinki info\textsuperscript{60} and International House Helsinki\textsuperscript{61} provide guidance in matters such as applying for citizenship and other concerns of official nature. The City of Helsinki also has a website called InfoFinland that features general information for immigrants in Finland, including the directions on how to apply for a citizenship\textsuperscript{62}.

Q35. **Does your Member State organise, support or finance integration measures (classes, training, etc.) to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship? If yes, please specify whether these are prescribed by law.**

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

Finnish language courses are a key part of the integration plan made for immigrants, and usually the goal of the Finnish courses that make up a part of the integration course is that the applicant would speak Finnish at a level corresponding to B2, the minimum language requirement for applying for citizenship.

\textsuperscript{60} https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/fi/kaupunki-ja-hallinto/hallinto/palvelut/palvelukuvaus?id=3137 (Page visited on 29/08/2019)
\textsuperscript{61} https://www.ihhelsinki.fi/ (Page visited on 09/09/2019)
\textsuperscript{62} https://www.infofinland.fi/fi/elama-suomessa/maahanmuuttajana-suomessa/suomen-kansalaisuus
Section 4: Dual citizenship

Q36. Is the third-country national required to renounce his/her other citizenship in order to acquire or hold citizenship in your Member State? This question links to Statistical Annex 1.4. If your answer is 'no' (i.e. dual citizenship is possible), kindly provide national data on dual citizenship as requested.

☐ Yes.
☒ No.
☐ Other.

Dual citizenship has been approved in Finnish legislation since 1 June 2003. This means that an individual will no longer lose Finnish citizenship if he/she acquires the citizenship of another country. Similarly, a foreign national no longer has to relinquish his/her present citizenship in order to acquire Finnish citizenship, assuming that the original country of citizenship approves dual citizenships.

Q37. Is the requirement to renounce dependent on the person’s other citizenship and are there exemptions from this requirement, for example for third-country nationals from third countries that do not allow a renunciation of citizenship?

N/A

Q38. Are there any particular requirements that third-country nationals have to fulfil if they want to acquire or hold the citizenship of your Member State while keeping their other one(s)? If so, which requirements?

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

Q39. Are there any particular restrictions placed on third-country nationals who hold dual citizenship? Does dual citizenship confer fewer rights? (e.g. access to specific types of employment)

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

Individuals with dual citizenship cannot be appointed to certain public offices. The amendment placing restrictions on dual citizens being appointed to military posts entered into force in July 2019. The amendment is based on the Government Proposal 252/2018 putting forward amendments to Section 37 of the Act on the Defense Forces, Section 16 on the Act on National Defense University and sections 10 and 26 of the Act on the Administration of the Border Guard. These acts were consequently amended such that it would only be possible to appoint an individual to a military post in the Finnish Defense Forces if the individual does not hold a citizenship of or ties of some other kind to another state as laid down in the Security Clearance Act, which could jeopardise state security, public safety or Finnish foreign relations or the safety of military service.

The Act on National Defense University was amended to include the precondition that in order to be eligible to be admitted to studies leading to an officer’s post, the candidate must not hold a citizenship of or ties of some other kind to another state, as laid down in the Security Clearance Act, which could jeopardise state security, public safety or Finnish foreign relations or the safety of military service or the Border Guard.

Similar amendments were also made to the Act on the Administration of the Border Guard regarding military posts in the Border Guard and applicants admitted to the basic course for border guards.
Q40. If your Member State allows dual / multiple citizenships, have there been any particular benefits or challenges that this policy has brought?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

After dual citizenships were allowed, questions concerning national security started to rise in recent years. Foreign attempts to influence Finnish dual citizens have risen to become a heated topic of debate.

The problems connected to the dual Finnish-Russian citizenship were the topic of public debate in the autumn of 2016, after the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, in its statement to the Administration Committee of the Parliament issued on 27 September 2016, put forth that “it is prescribed by Russian legislation that all Russian citizens, regardless of their status as dual citizens, have the obligation to provide assistance to Russian security forces.”

The Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (Supo) had stated the following on the same topic in its 2016 Year Book:

In terms of Finland’s national security, dual citizenship can also pose a threat, because a foreign state may treat its double nationals as if they only had the citizenship of that country. Supo has information about certain countries’ intelligence organisations using their national legislation against double nationals. They use it to force double nationals into clandestine intelligence cooperation against the country the double national lives in.

---

63 Statement by the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service to the Administration Committee of the Parliament, 27/09/2016, p. 3
64 Supo Year Book 2016, p. 11
Section 5: Citizenship and integration

Q41. How does the integration policy of your Member State address the acquisition of citizenship? Is citizenship addressed in your national integration strategy/action plan? Please explain (e.g. is naturalisation considered the end point of an integration process or is the acquisition of citizenship intended to facilitate integration)?

☒ Yes.
☐ No.

The acquisition of Finnish citizenship has, generally, been viewed as a step in the integration process, and no direct connections have usually been made between naturalisation and the promotion of immigrant integration. Immigrant integration is usually explored in a wider context, and it is seen to incorporate the preconditions needed for finding employment and creating some sort of a sense of belonging. In the Government Proposal (185/2010) to Parliament on the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and on amending certain related acts states that “Acquiring Finnish citizenship should be seen more as a step in an immigrant’s integration path and the acquisition of citizenship does not necessarily mean that the integration process has been completely finished or a success.”

However, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, which is the legislative basis for steering integration policy in Finland, excludes Finnish citizens in the following manner:

- Immigrants who have moved to Finland and are not Finnish citizens, i.e. foreign citizens and stateless individuals, are in the scope of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration.
- The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration does not apply to asylum seekers or individuals who have a valid visa or are exempted from a visa. The Act is similarly not applied to an individual who is applying for his/her first residence permit in Finland before the residence permit has been granted.
- The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration does not apply dual citizens, if one of the citizenships is Finnish citizenship.
- The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration is not applied to a child born to a Finnish citizen and foreign citizen and who has received Finnish citizenship.
- The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration does apply to a child born in Finland to a foreign parent, if the child has not acquired Finnish citizenship at birth. However, the law does not apply to the parent of the child, if the parent has lived in Finland for a long period of time and has Finnish citizenship.

The Government Proposal (80/2010) to Parliament on the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and on amending certain related acts follows the view of the European Commission that alleviating the naturalisation process will promote integration:

Acquiring citizenship is meaningful not only as an act that has significant influence on the legal status of an individual, but also in the promotion of an individual's integration process. After becoming a citizen, a foreign citizen is accepted as a full member of the society with all relevant rights and obligations. As an individual’s language skills and understanding of the society improve, their opportunities for interaction with the original population increase. The link between naturalisation and integration policies has been brought up within the European Union and in other international connections, and their link to the general immigration policy of the states. In its Handbook on Integration (2004), the Commission of the European Union has stated that acquiring citizenship and receiving political rights are essential in the integration process of immigrants who are long-term residents of the Union. The Commission has emphasised that receiving full civil rights and obligations can encourage an individual to contribute to the life in the member state more fully in its many different aspects: politics, society, social, financial and cultural.

The Government’s Integration Programme for 2012-2015 similarly acknowledged the importance of promoting citizenship acquisition, and it stated that the amendments of the Nationality Act would help foreign students' integration in the Finnish labour market:

---

65 E-mail interview, Ministry of Labour, 30/08/2019
The amendments to the Nationality Act that entered into force on 1 September 2011 similarly promoted the likelihood of individuals who completed their studies in Finland to search for a job in Finland and to enter the Finnish labour market after the completion of their studies. It is, in all, easier for an individual who had completed studies in Finland and whose integration process and language studies had begun during the studies, to integrate into the Finnish labour market than for an individual who does not have any existing ties to Finland.

The attitude to citizenship and integration matters has, however, varied greatly depending on the political climate. In the legislative motion LA12/2018 for the amendment of the Nationality Act, citizenship is viewed as a sort of a reward for successful integration:

If a foreign citizen living in Finland is granted Finnish citizenship, this should be an accomplishment, something that you can achieve if you have integrated successfully. It can take several years to integrate into a new country and society, and language skills are an important factor in the process. The requirement of comprehensive, long-term integration also encourages individuals to put in an effort in order to integrate into the society; they will know that citizenship cannot be acquired in a short time.

Unlike the Integration Programme for 2012–2015, the Government Integration Programme for 2016–2019 no longer mentions naturalisation as a step in the integration process nor draws a parallel between integration and naturalisation. Generally speaking, the link between citizenship and integration has seldom been brought up in integration policy in recent years.

Q42. Is there any evidence, e.g., from research or evaluation, indicating that the acquisition of citizenship facilitates integration, in particular on the labour market?

There has been very little research on the topic in Finland. The requirements of acquiring citizenship include the language skill requirement, a residence period of at least four or five years and the integrity requirement. The general understanding is that finding employment gets easier with time, and it is presumed that when applying for a Finnish citizenship, a person is relatively well integrated into the society.

In the Government Proposal (80/2010) to Parliament on the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and on amending certain related acts, it was proposed that the period of residence requirement should be alleviated, acknowledging that naturalisation could have a positive effect on finding employment.

The amendments on residence period requirements will have positive effects on the national economy. As the labour force is ageing and companies operate in a global economy, there is a growing need for labour. Accepting temporary residence in Finland would, first and foremost, apply to the persons who have completed their studies in Finland or arrived in Finland for work, and this could motivate skilled employees to stay in Finland, if it would be possible for them to acquire citizenship sooner than is now possible. The availability of labour force is, similarly, a factor in the investment decisions made by companies and in the decisions on whether new businesses will be founded and whether existing ones retain their operations in Finland. Improving the flexibility of the naturalisation process is also a signal: Finland wants to be seen as an attractive destination country for skilled employees, and to offer the foreigners who are permanently living in Finland an opportunity to acquire Finnish citizenship.

The Government Institute for Economic Research has researched the involvement of immigrants who entered Finland in the 1990s (Hämäläinen Kari et al: 1990-luvun maahanmuuttajien työllisyys, tuloverot ja tulonsiirrot, Työministeriö, työpoliittinen tutkimus 265/2005) According to this study, the employment rate of immigrants who moved to Finland between 1989 and 2000, gradually improved the longer they had been living in Finland. Acquiring citizenship can also be one factor promoting the employment of long-term residents in Finland. The acquisition of citizenship improves an individual’s sense of stability and belonging to Finnish society, which will promote the commitment of new citizens to the Finnish labour market.

Also see Q41.

---

71 E-mail interview, Ministry of Labour, 30/08/2019
72 E-mail interview with Assistant Professor of Sociology, Lena Näre, University of Helsinki, 28/08/2019
Q43. What are the main differences and new rights and duties between being a citizen of your country compared to holding a permanent or long-term residence permit? Please elaborate on the following aspects:

Finnish citizens have certain rights and obligations that do not apply to foreigners living in Finland.

Rights

- right to acquire a Finnish passport
- right to enter to Finland and refuse extradition to another country
- right to vote in presidential elections, parliamentary elections and referendums after turning 18
- right to stand in the parliamentary elections after turning 18
- possibility to be appointed to the public offices for which Finnish citizenship is a requirement
- all the rights of an EU citizen, including freedom of movement and employment in the EU, and the right to vote and become a candidate in EU elections

Obligations

- Obligation to participate or assist in national Defense. Male citizens who are at least 18 years old have the obligation to complete military service.
- Obligation to comply with Finnish laws also outside Finland. A Finnish citizen can be convicted in Finland for a crime committed abroad.

Q43a: Participation in regional or national elections.
See above.

Q43b: Access to certain types of employment (jobs that are only open to citizens of your country).
See above.

Q43c: Other differences / advantages, such as social and economic rights (social security, benefits, allowances, etc.)?
See above.

Q44. What support is given once citizenship has been granted to support the new citizen in their role as a citizen (e.g. information sessions organised at a local level, other information material)? Are there good practices in place in your Member State?

There are no specific support measures for new citizens. Before the acquisition of citizenship, the applicant can receive integration support measures.

Some cities offer perks to new citizens. The City of Espoo, for example, offered perks for new citizens at its museums and other cultural events in 2018-2019. New citizens could acquire museum, concert, theatre and music festival tickets for free74.

See also Q41.

74 https://www.espoo.fi/fi-FI/Kulttuuri_ja_liikunta/Kulttuuri/Kulttuuria_kaikille/Uusien_kansalaisten_kulttuuriedut (Page visited on 09/09/2019)
Q45. With the acquisition of national citizenship there is also the acquisition of EU citizenship which confers rights such as the freedom to move or reside within the territory of the EU or the right to vote for and stand as a candidate in the European Parliament and municipal elections. What information or other support measures (if any) are given in your country to allow new citizens to enact their role as EU citizens (e.g. signposting to information material on the rights and responsibilities of EU citizens or specific, tailored information)? Is this different / additional to information provided to all citizens on their rights and responsibilities as EU citizens?

There have been no separate information campaigns or similar on the rights of new EU citizens for those who have received Finnish citizenship. Some municipalities also acknowledge the residents who have acquired Finnish citizenship, but EU citizenship is not brought up in these contexts.75

Q46. Are there any indications (e.g. in reports, studies or statistics) that acquisition of citizenship facilitates mobility to other Member States and/or mobility or longer-term migration to non-EU countries?

☐ Yes.
☒ No.

No comprehensive studies on the topic exist, but in connection with processing citizenship applications, an analysis is carried out whether there is any indication that the individual aims to move abroad utilising the freedom of movement guaranteed by Finnish citizenship.

One of the preconditions laid down in Section 13 of the Nationality Act is that an individual may not be naturalised if there is reason to believe that the main purpose of acquiring citizenship is to take advantage of the benefits related to Finnish citizenship without aiming to settle in Finland.

It is challenging to address this question also because officials only learn about an individual moving away from Finland if the individual submits a notice of change of address to the Population Register Centre.

To provide at least an approximation on the matter, EMN Finland requested Statistics Finland to provide statistics of those individuals, listed by their former citizenship, who have moved from Finland in 2014–2018 and who have acquired Finnish citizenship not less than one year but at least one day before leaving (see Table 1).

Based on the data provided by Statistics Finland, the number of individuals who have moved out of the country shortly after acquiring citizenship is very small in comparison to the total number of new citizens in the period of time from 2014 to 2018 (see Table 2). The acquired data does not indicate that receiving Finnish citizenship would mean increased international relocation.

When the data is observed in more detail, no noteworthy trends can be detected between the various nationalities. Russian citizens have held first place in these statistics every year. This is most likely explained by the fact that, besides Estonians, Russians are the largest nationality group in Finland, and there is, overall, high mobility between the two countries as they are neighbours.

It must be noted, however, that the data obtained from Statistics Finland on people who have moved away from Finland is based solely on the official notices of change of address submitted to the Population Register Centre. Thus, the individuals who have left the country without notifying the officials do not appear in these numbers.

75 E-mail interview of the international team of Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, 19/09/2019.
Table 1: The individuals, listed by their former citizenship, who have moved from Finland in 2014-2018 and have acquired Finnish citizenship less than one year but at least one day before leaving: top 10 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR OF LEAVING FINLAND</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former citizenship</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>Former citizenship</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>Former citizenship</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Total of foreign nationals who have been permanently living in Finland and who have received Finnish citizenship in 2014-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8260</td>
<td>7921</td>
<td>9375</td>
<td>12219</td>
<td>9211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

76 Source: Statistics Finland, figures based on change of address notifications
77 Source: Statistics Finland
Section 6: Conclusions and lessons learned

Please comment on the findings of your national report by drawing conclusions, identifying any key challenges and lessons learned, as well as outlining any planned policy developments in the upcoming years:

On average 13,000 people applied for Finnish citizenship per year from 2014 to 2018 (including citizenship declarations). Rejections were issued in 16 per cent of the cases on average every year during this period of time\(^{78}\). Each year, inadequate language skills were the most common reason for rejections. Applicants often apply for an exemption of the language skill requirement by pleading illiteracy or a health condition, but exceptions are very rarely made to the requirement and there must be very strong arguments behind the exceptions.

In second place as a reason for rejection is unestablished identity, which has become a significant challenge in the processing of citizenship cases after the European migrant crisis. The asylum seekers who arrived in 2014–2015 have now resided in Finland for the required minimum time of four years, and many of them have started submitting citizenship applications. However, many of them lack essential documents or inconsistencies remain in their personal data, which has complicated the processing of the applications.

There have been no significant amendments to the Finnish Nationality Act after the ones made in 2003 and 2011. The most recent amendments originated from security threats brought up in public debate, and they have been associated with the rights of dual citizens or the revocation of citizenship. International phenomena, such as the terrorist attacks in Europe and EU citizens travelling to conflict areas to join the extremist group ISIS, as well as the sexual offences that came to light in Finland in 2018, have turned the spotlight on questions of immigration and, consequently, citizenship as a part of a wider security debate. The global security situation has, at times, been prone to rapid change, and as a result, concerns have risen over whether the criteria for granting Finnish citizenship are adequately strict, and when could revoking citizenship come into question.

Appointing dual citizens to various high-ranking public offices with strategic importance has been a cause of concern. Background factors of this debate have included the changes in Russian foreign policy and the relationship between the EU and Russia growing tenser. The idea of associating the concept of citizenship with loyalty to one’s home country has regained popularity. This change is noteworthy, especially when considering that the Government proposal (235/2002), for example, one stated that:

Multiple citizenships have been considered detrimental in particular in the context of security policy, for the safety of citizens and for reasons of its purposes. However, in recent times, the general attitude has become more lenient. The change in attitude is likely to be due to the general decline in the importance of citizenship\(^ {79}\).

Official sources remark that the connection between citizenship and integration has not been addressed much, and there has not been much research on the topic in Finland either. According to the replies from authorities, the official context views citizenship as a step in a successful integration process, not the perfect ending of the process. On the other hand, an individual who meets the requirements for naturalisation laid down in the law can be regarded as fairly well integrated in society. Due to this, sufficient command of Finnish or Swedish language is one of the most important requirements of citizenship acquisition. In practice, acquiring citizenship means that the applicant must be integrated to Finland to a certain degree.

In political debate, acquiring citizenship has, at times, been portrayed as a some sort of an achievement and a reward for successful integration into Finnish society. The Chair of the Finns Party, Jussi Halla-aho, for example, has stated that\(^ {80}\) “The Finns Party regards that citizenship should be an acknowledgement of successful integration and commitment to Finland and the Finnish way. It should not be a gift that you get without effort, one that is given in order to lure immigrants to integrate.” There is a significant change in the tone of voice in the public debate in comparison to the earlier ideas of the importance of citizenship for the society. The Nationality Act, for example, was amended in September 2011, and in this amendment the required period of residence was decreased from six years to five. The alleviation in question was estimated to have positive effects on the national economy for example.

For a foreign citizen, acquiring citizenship in Finland is a fairly simplified process. When you acquire citizenship, you receive a short letter either on the web service of the Finnish Immigration Service or by mail. After this, it is the duty of the individual to find out what rights and obligations go with Finnish citizenship. The study indicates that, at least on the national level, there are no separate support measures for new Finnish citizens. Naturalisation ceremonies do not exist at a national level. Similarly, no demands for committing to Finnish values or loyalty to the Finnish state are presented when you acquire the citizenship. Applicants do not receive clear instructions on the fact that with the acquisition of Finnish citizenship, the individual also becomes an EU citizen. New citizens are acknowledged in some cities and municipalities, but generally speaking it can be stated that hardly any specific support is offered for new citizens after they have received citizenship.

\(^ {78}\)Figures calculated on the basis of statistics of the Finnish Immigration Services


The most recent amendment regarding citizenship matters – the Act that governs dual citizens’ appointment to offices in the Defense Forces – entered into force in July 2019\textsuperscript{81}. There were no other ongoing projects with relevance to citizenship in 2019.

\textsuperscript{81} https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10856669 (Page visited on 26/09/2019)
Annex 1 National statistics

Please fill in the attached excel sheet with the respective statistics for your Member State. Due to the limitations of Eurostat data and national data, statistics provided in this annex shall include all third-country nationals.

N.B. All Eurostat data will be extracted centrally by the EMN Service Provider. National data will be provided to the extent possible by each EMN NCP. In their national reports, NCPs should briefly describe and comment on the data.

The Statistical Annex consists of the following:

Annex 1.1: Number of third-country nationals that have acquired the citizenship of your Member State in 2018, differentiated by the 10 main former citizenships of the persons concerned and by sex and age groups. N.B. Data for 2014-2017 will be extracted centrally from Eurostat (migr_acq).

Annex 1.2: Number third-country nationals that have acquired citizenship between 2014-2018, differentiated by the mode of acquiring citizenship and disaggregated by sex, if possible.

Annex 1.3: Share of third-country nationals who acquired the citizenship of your Member State among all resident non-citizens in 2018. N.B. Data for 2014-2017 will be extracted centrally from Eurostat (migr_acqs).

Annex 1.4: Number of third-country nationals that have acquired dual citizenship between 2014-2018, differentiated by the mode of acquiring citizenship and disaggregated by sex, if possible. N.B. This annex 1.4 is optional for those Member States which collect such data.