EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK STUDY 2019
Pathways to citizenship for third-country nationals in the EU Member States
National Report: Greece
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STUDY 2019:3
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Cover: General Secretariat for Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum, Ministry of Citizen Protection
http://immigration.gov.gr/apoktese-ithageneias

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The European Migration Network (EMN) was established in 2003, originally as a preparatory action of the European Commission, with the aim of providing the European Commission and the Member States with objective, reliable, comparable and up-to-date data on migration and asylum, to support/build policymaking in the European Union and, hence, their national policies in these areas. Subsequently, in 2008, the Council of the EU, with the No. 381/2008/EK Judgment founded the EMN, as a permanent structure that will operate within the European Commission, with the participation of Member States in order to achieve these goals.

Further information on the EMN and its work on the website:

www.emn.europa.eu
or on the Greek website:
http://emn.immigration.gov.gr

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Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>GNC (KEI in Greek)</td>
<td>Greek Nationality Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMN</td>
<td>European Migration Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Presidential Decree</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCN</td>
<td>Third-Country National</td>
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<td>GG</td>
<td>Government Gazette</td>
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</table>
National Contribution from Greece

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”
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 1-6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The National Contribution from Greece has been conducted under the 2019:3 study of the European Migration Network (EMN). It aims at mapping and comparing the various approaches of EU Member States regarding third-country nationals’ acquisition of citizenship in a Member State. 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 third-country nationals (TCNs). 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.” 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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1</strong> provides an overview and outline of the legal and policy issues related to citizenship in Greece and refers to legal instruments that cover the acquisition of citizenship for third-country nationals, regarding the application of ius sanguinis and/or ius soli principle, changes in laws and policies related to the acquisition of citizenship of third-country nationals in recent years that have brought about changes in the procedures or conditions of citizenship acquisition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 2</strong> examines conditions and requirements for the acquisition of citizenship after birth, through ordinary naturalisation and refers to the requirement of knowing the language or not, the naturalization tests and requirements relating to behavior, economic/financial situation or the standard of living of the applicant, the exclusion criteria (e.g. threats to national security and public order), as well as the specific groups of third-country nationals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3</strong> investigates procedural aspects for the acquisition of citizenship in Greece, the procedure in place for third-country nationals to obtain citizenship through ordinary naturalisation, the public authorities/agencies that are involved in procedures for third-country nationals’ acquisition of the citizenship, the length of the procedure and the costs of the application, the challenges that have emerged upon verification of the applicants’ identity at the naturalization, the right to appeal or to base legal proceedings in the case of an application being rejected, and if the state organizes, supports or finances integration measures (courses, training, etc.) to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Section 4</strong> focuses on issues of dual citizenship, if a third-country national is required to renounce his/her other foreign nationality in order to obtain or retain the nationality of the Member-State, if there are special conditions that third-country nationals must meet in order to maintain both their original and their new citizenship, whether the state allows dual/multiple citizenship, and whether there have been specific benefits or challenges of this policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 5</strong> is focused on citizenship and integration issues, the differences and advantages (social, political, economic) resulting from the acquisition of the nationality of the Member-State, and whether there are support measures (to allow new citizens to enact their role as EU citizens).</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Section 6</strong> concludes with some key conclusions drawn from the previous sections 1-5, based on the findings obtained during the preparation of the 2019 National Report.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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:
     The signing of International Conventions by the country falls under the area of responsibility of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The General Secretariat of Citizenship of the Ministry of the Interior has expressed views on the subject matter.

b) 1997 European Convention on Nationality?
   - Yes.
   - No. Please explain why:
     The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the responsibility and the Ministry of Interior has expressed its view on the ratification. Furthermore, the substance of Greek citizenship legislation covers almost all the provisions of the 1997 European Convention on Citizenship.

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).

The process of acquiring citizenship is not provided by the Constitution of Greece. The main legal instrument covering the acquisition of citizenship of third country nationals in Greece is the Greek Nationality Code (Law 3284/2004) as amended and in force. The most important amendments of the Greek Nationality Code were introduced by Law 3838/2010 and Law 4332/2015, which – among other – also introduced special procedures for the acquisition of greek citizenship for the children of immigrants. Significant changes were also introduced by Law 4604/2019. The following table is relevant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law/Year</th>
<th>Number GG</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3284/2004¹</td>
<td>A 217</td>
<td>Ratification of the Greek Nationality Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3838/2010²</td>
<td>A 49</td>
<td>Recent provisions on Greek Citizenship and the political participation of expatriates and legally residents-immigrants and other arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4251/2014⁵</td>
<td>A 80</td>
<td>Immigration and Social Integration Code and other provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4332/2015⁶</td>
<td>A 76</td>
<td>Amendment of the provisions of the Greek Nationality Code – Amendment of Law 4521/2014 to transpose to Greek law Directive 2011/98/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council “on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State” and Directive 2014/36/EU “on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers” and other provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4604/2019⁷</td>
<td>A 50</td>
<td>Promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence - Citizenship acquisition arrangements - Election-related provisions in local government - Other provisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐217‐3284‐10112004.pdf and https://www.e‐nomothesia.gr/kat‐ithageneia/n‐3284‐2004.html
² http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐49‐3838‐24032010.pdf and http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐49‐3838‐24032010.pdf
³ https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/02‐8568_1_ithageneia.pdf
⁴ http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐49‐3838‐24032010.pdf and http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐49‐3838‐24032010.pdf
⁵ http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐49‐3838‐24032010.pdf and http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/24e0c302‐6021‐4a6b‐b7e4‐8259e281e5f3/fek‐49‐3838‐24032010.pdf
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? 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.

Significant changes have been made recently mainly via Law 4332/2015 “Amendment of the provisions of the Greek Nationality Code – Amendment of Law 4521/2014 to transpose to Greek law Directive 2011/98/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council “on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State” and Directive 2014/36/EU “on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers and other provisions”.

Via L. 4332/2015 the possibility to acquire the Greek Citizenship has been established for second generation immigrants who have grown strong bonds with the country through their birth and/or their attendance of a Greek school in the country. In particular, the new provisions concern the acquisition of Greek citizenship by children of foreigners who are legally and permanently residing in the country due to: a) birth in Greece and attendance at a Greece school in Greece, b) successful completion of nine years of study in Primary and Secondary Education or six years of Secondary Education in a Greek school in Greece, c) Graduation from a Greek University, under the pre-condition of having a Secondary Education diploma of a Greek school n Greece.

No.

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.

It is clarified that the acquisition of Greek citizenship implies the acquisition of European citizenship, thus the person enjoys all the rights and has the same obligations as the citizens of Greece and the European Union.

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

Yes.

No.

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

Ius sanguinis.

The principle of ius sanguinis is primarily in force, since according to Article 1 par.1 of the Greek Nationality Code a child of a Greek father or a Greek mother acquires the Greek citizenship upon birth.

Ius soli. Please explain:

No.

Unconditional ius soli

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8 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.
The principle of the ius soli has been subsidiary in force in the Greek citizenship system since 1856, as far as stateless people are concerned. In accordance with the Greek Nationality Code in force (Article 1 par.2 sect. b and c of L. 3838/2010) “Whoever is born on Greek territory acquires Greek Citizenship by birth, provided that: ...b. he/she does not acquire any foreign nationality by birth nor can he/she acquire such nationality by declaration of his/her parents to the relevant foreign authorities, if the citizenship law of his/her parents’ nationality requires such a declaration to be submitted, or c. he/she is of unknown nationality, on condition that the failure to establish any foreign nationality acquired by birth is not due to his or her parent’s refusal to cooperate.”

Conditional ius soli.

Automatic double ius soli.

Conditional double ius soli.

Under conditions. According to Article 1 par. 2 sect. a’ of the Greek Nationality code “Anyone born on Greek territory acquires Greek citizenship by birth, if: a) one of his/her parents was born in Greece and has resided permanently in the country since his/her birth”.

Mixed ius soli and sanguinis.

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.

According to the Greek Nationality Code (Articles 5-9), naturalization is the main way of acquiring Greek citizenship for a foreign-national, under terms and conditions depending on the category in which the applicant belongs (foreigners – expatriates/co-ethnics).

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.

Greece provides specific provisions for the naturalization of foreigners residing in the country that have Greek national origin (expatriates/co-ethnics). The main categories are expatriates from Albania and expatriates from the countries of the former USSR, for whom Articles 23 of Law 3838/2010 and 39 of Law 4606/2019 are applied, respectively. The naturalization of expatriates living abroad is also possible (Article 10 of the Greek Nationality Code). The Greek Nationality Code also provides for honorary naturalization (Article 13) according to which a foreign national who has offered special services to Greece or if his/her naturalisation may serve the country’s best interest, can be naturalised as a Greek citizen via a Presidential Decree, following the justified proposal of the Minister of Interior.

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9 This means that certain conditions have to be fulfilled, e.g. minimum period of residence in the country of the parents.
10 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.
11 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.
12 http://www.immigration.gr/2018/05/blog-post_23.html
According to Article 14 of Law 3284/2004, children born to mixed marriage of a Greek woman with a foreigner before 1984 or a Greek man with a foreign woman before 1982 can acquire Greek citizenship by declaration.

Since 2015, with the adoption of Law 4332, the acquisition of Greek citizenship has been established by filing a relevant application for second generation immigrants who have grown strong bonds with the country, via their birth and/or their attendance of a Greek school in the country. Those provisions are as follows: Article 1A of the Greek Nationality Code, as replaced by Article 1 of Law 4332 (Government Gazette A 767/9.7.2015), refers to the possibility of acquiring Greek citizenship by declaration and application due to birth and attendance of a Greek school Greece:

1. A foreign child born in Greece establishes the right to acquire Greek citizenship under the following conditions:
   a) His/her enrollment in the first grade of a Greek Primary School and continuous school attendance at the time of submission of the declaration – application of paragraph 2.
   b) The previous continuous legal residence of one of his/her parents for at least five years before his/her birth. If the child was born before the completion of the above mentioned five-year residence, the right to acquire Greek citizenship shall be established by the completion of the parent's ten-year continuous legal residence.
   c) The legal residence of his/her parents and possession by at least one of them one of the explicitly listed residence permit types in the country.

Article 1B of the Greek Nationality Code, as added by Article 1A of Law 4332/2015, refers to the possibility of acquiring Greek citizenship by declaration and application, due to attendance of a Greek school in Greece:

1. A minor foreigner residing permanently and legally in Greece establishes the right to acquire Greek citizenship due to the attendance of a Greek school, on condition that he/she has successfully completed either nine grades of primary and secondary education or six grades of secondary education. Kindergarten attendance is not taken into account. Successful completion of the required grades is proved by a relevant certificate from the competent authority.
2. A foreigner who permanently and legally resides in Greece and is a graduate of a Department or School of a Greek Higher Educational Institute or Technological Educational Institute (ie a University graduate) establishes the right to acquire Greek citizenship provided he/she has a secondary education diploma from a Greek school in Greece. The declaration - application referred to in paragraph 3 shall be submitted within an exclusive time limit of three (3) years from the date of graduation from the Department or School of a Greek Higher Educational Institute or Technological Educational Institute.”

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

Law 3284/2004 provides for the following regarding the recovery of Greek citizenship:

Article 22: “A Greek woman who lost Greek citizenship because she was married to a foreigner may retrieve it, if she declares her relevant intention to the General Secretary of the Region or the Greek Consular Authority of her place of residence or stay”.

Article 23: “A child born by a Greek mother who lost the Greek nationality because of legalization or recognition by a foreign father, may retrieve it, if he/she declares his/her relevant intention to the General Secretary of the Region or the Greek Consular Authority of his/her place of residence or stay. Children of those who acquire Greek citizenship, under the provisions of this article, shall become Greek nationals, if at the date of the declaration they are minors and unmarried”.

Article 24: “Retrieving Greek citizenship in the cases of the preceding articles is confirmed by decision of the Secretary General of the Region concerned”.

Regarding honorary naturalization of Article 13 of the same law, as applied, it is provided that: “Via a Presidential Decree, issued after a justified proposal by the Minister of Interior, a foreigner who has provided Greece with special services or whose naturalization may serve the country’s best interest, can be naturalized as a Greek citizen, subject to the conditions of sect. b, paragraph 1 of Article 5, irrespective of the fact that the rest of the requirements of Article 5, as well as those of articles 6-8 are met or not. For the purposes of the present, via a decision of the Minister of Interior, the way of confirming the conditions of sect. b, paragraph 1 of Article 5” will be determined (art.179 of L.4635/2019, GG A’ 167).

Q8. What is the most common/frequent way from those mentioned above for third-country nationals to acquire citizenship in your Member State?14 This question links to Statistical Annex 1.2.

Naturalization and since 2015 and onwards, the acquisition of Greek citizenship due to the attendance of Greek school, as well.
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 fulfill 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.

According to the provisions of Article 5 of the Greek Nationality Code, a foreigner wishing to become a Greek citizen by naturalization must meet the following formal requirements:

a. Adulthood.

b. No penal impediment. In particular, the applicant must not have been irrevocably sentenced:
   i) In a sentence of deprivation of freedom for at least one year, in the last decade before the naturalization application was submitted, for an offense committed intentionally.
   ii) In a sentence of deprivation of freedom for at least 6 months, regardless of the time of issue of the conviction, for any of the offenses, listed in paragraph 1 sect. b of the above article.

c. An expulsion from the country has not been ordered for him/her or there is no other pending issue regarding his/her legal residence status in the country.

d. To reside in Greece legally and permanently for a specified continuous period, depending on the category he/she belongs to and the residence permit he/she holds at the date of submission of the naturalization application.

e. To hold a definitive residence permit of a certain type.

In addition to the above formal requirements, he/she must also meet the following essential naturalization requirements as set out in Article 5A of the Greek Nationality Code:

a. To have sufficient knowledge of the Greek language, in order to fulfill the obligations arising from being a Greek citizen.

b. To have been smoothly integrated into the economic and social life of the country. In order to ascertain the proper integration of the applicant into the Greek society, the following elements shall be taken into account in particular: familiarity with Greek history and Greek culture, professional and general economic activity, any public or charitable activities, potential studies at Greek educational institutions, participation in social organizations or collective bodies whose members are Greek citizens, possible related bond and marriage with Greek citizen, the constant fulfillment of his/her tax obligations by him/her, as well as his/her obligations to social security funds, the ownership by acquiring property for housing and his/her overall financial situation.

c. To be able to participate actively and effectively in the political life of the country, while respecting the fundamental principles that govern it. In particular, the following elements are taken into account in order to be able to participate in the political life: adequate familiarization with the institutions of the politics of the Hellenic Republic and the political life of the country and the basic knowledge of the Greek political history, especially the modern. Of particular importance in the assessment of the adoption of Greek political identity is the participation in collective bodies, political associations or associations involving Greek citizens, as well as previous participation in primary local government elections.”

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?

Depending on the category to which the applicant belongs according to his/her residence permit, he/she may apply for naturalization after a residence of 3 to 12 years.

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.

The residence must be legal and permanent at the same time. The prerequisite time of residence depends on the type of residence permit one holds on the day of the submission of the application and is proved, as far as legal residence is concerned, by the possession by the applicant of continuous residence permits for the corresponding period.

☑ Presence in the country sufficient

It is required as well.
☐ No residence/presence in the Member State is required and citizenship is granted upon entry (e.g. investor schemes).

☐ Other.

For specific categories of individuals, it is required to have less or even no former legal residence time at all:
For spouses of Greeks with children, parents of nationals, stateless and refugees and those with European citizenship, a three-year legal and permanent residence in Greece, is required.
For the expatriate Greeks (co-ethnics) and for those born and permanently residing in Greece, there is no time prerequisite.

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.

Legal and permanent residence must take place.

☐ No, holding a permit is sufficient.

☐ Other:

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

The legality of the stay is proved by the possession by the applicant of continuous residence permits for the time period required before the naturalization application is submitted. The permanence of the stay for the critical period can be evidenced by the presentation of tax declaration statements, insurance carrier certificate, any employment contract, residence proofs of rental, tax certificates, Public Utility and Organization bills, certificates of attendance of educational institutions in Greece, passport/s etc.

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

☐ Yes.

According to Article 7A of the Greek Nationality Code, as added under Article 35 of Law 4604/2010:

1. If it is found that, the applicant does not reside permanently in the country after submitting the application for naturalization and until he/she is called to be examined (before the Naturalisation Committee), in accordance with Article 7, the application shall be rejected by the Minister of the Interior, subject to paragraph 2.

2. "The application for naturalization shall not be rejected in accordance with paragraph 1, but the procedure shall be suspended by the competent Regional Citizenship Directorate, upon the applicant’s request, as long as it is found that during the period from the submission of the application till the call (of the applicant) before the Naturalization Committee, one of the following conditions are met:

(a) the applicant resides outside Greece for a time period that does not exceed the eighteen (18) months and continues to maintain biotic relations with the country,
(b) the applicant resides outside Greece for study reasons,
(c) the applicant resides outside Greece for reasons of force majeure and in particular for serious health reasons relating to him/her. The decision to suspend the process shall be notified immediately to the applicant”.

3. Upon application of the person concerned, the process, which was suspended according to paragraph 2, shall be continued when the applicant has again made Greece his/her country of permanent residence for a period equal to that of his absence”.

☐ No.

☐ Other
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: see table
- Refugee status. Number of years: see table
- Temporary residence permit. Number of years: -
- Other protection statuses. Number of years: see table
- Other status: see table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF RESIDENCE PERMIT/REQUIRED TIME</th>
<th>YEARS OF RESIDENCE IN GREECE BEFORE THE SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Long-term resident permit</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Certificate/residence title granted to citizens of EU Member States or EFTA countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Card or other residence title issued to third-country nationals-family members of a Greek citizen or a citizen of a Member State of the European Union</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Recognized political refugee card or a family member holding such a card</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Card of subsidiary protection status or residence permit for humanitarian reasons-ONLY the cases that fall under Article 19A, paragraph 1, sect. 6. L 4253/2014 (or family members owning such cards)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Travel documents or special card issued by a national authority in accordance with the provisions of the New York International Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Second generation residence permit</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Residence permit of indefinite duration or of ten years duration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Residence permit for investment activity (executives are excluded)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Residence permit of the owner of the property or permanent residence permit of the investor</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Greek spouses with child and one of the above residence permits</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Parent of minor national with one of the above residence permits (if the Greek citizenship of the child was not acquired under 1A)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Any other legal and definitive residence permit other than the above (e.g. Dependent Work, Special identity card for foreign spouses of people of Greek descent, other humanitarian reasons)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Circular of 01.07.2019 Ar. 6 “Notification of new provisions on citizenship” (L.4604/2019 Α’50), p.38
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\textsuperscript{15}

\ding{51}\textbf{Yes.}

According to the provisions of article 5A of the Greek Nationality Code, as amended by the provisions of article 32 of Law 4604/2019\textsuperscript{16}, the foreigner who applies for his/her naturalisation, he/she should have adequate knowledge of the Greek language, in order to fulfill his/her duties as Greek citizen. The required level is as follows: The level required is: a. B1 for understanding and producing oral speech and for understanding written speech; and b. A1 for adolescents and adults for the production of written speech, in accordance with the standards set in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the same article cases are mentioned, where the applicant is exempted from the language test or where the test level varies.

\ding{55} \textbf{No.}

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.)?

\ding{51} According to the provisions of article 5A of the Greek Nationality Code, as amended by the provisions of article 32 of Law 4604/2019, the assessment, verification of adequate knowledge of the Greek language is made by the competent Naturalization Committee. The Naturalization Committee bases its assessment on a B1 language test for understanding and producing oral speech and writing and A1 for adolescents and adults for writing, in accordance with the standards laid down in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the same article cases are mentioned, where the applicant is exempted from the language test or where the test level varies.

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)?

\ding{55} \textbf{Yes.}

The assessment of Greek language knowledge via a special procedure (test) is provided for in Article 32 of Law 4604/2019, but the relative procedure has not been implemented so far.

\ding{55} \textbf{No.}

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.

\ding{51} \textbf{Yes.}

Personal interview with the applicant before the competent Naturalization Committee. The interview was provided via Law 2910/2001. A similar provision has been incorporated ever since in the relevant legislation (Law 3284/2004, Law 3838/2010 and Law 4604/2019).

\ding{55} \textbf{No.}

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

\ding{55} \textbf{Yes.}

\ding{55} \textbf{No.}

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?

\ding{55} \textbf{Yes.}

\ding{55} \textbf{No.}

\textsuperscript{15} Please indicate the level according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages - CEFR (A1-C2).

\textsuperscript{16} http://www.karagilanis.gr/files/nomos_4604_19_fek_50.pdf
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.

The administrative process of naturalization is completed with the individual’s oath, as a Greek Citizen. The foreigner’s oath must take place within one year from the publication of the naturalization decision in the Government Gazette, otherwise the naturalization decision is revoked. The oath given is as follows: “I swear to keep my faith in the homeland, obey the Constitution and the laws of the State and to conscientiously fulfill my duties as a Greek citizen.”

☐ No.

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.

For the the naturalization the penal status of the applicant is taken into account. In particular, according to the provisions of Article 5 of the Greek Nationality Code the applicant must:

a. Not have been irrevocably convicted:
   (i) In a sentence of deprivation of freedom of at least one year, in the last decade prior to the application for naturalization, for an offense committed intentionally.
   (ii) In a sentence of deprivation of freedom of at least six months, irrespective of the time of issue of the conviction decision, for any of the offenses listed in par 1. Sect. b of Article 5.

b. An expulsion from the country has not been ordered for him/her or there is no other pending issue regarding his legal residence status in the Country.

c. There should not be any public or national security reasons concerning the applicant (Article 5B of the Greek Nationality Code).

The non-payment of taxes is not a reason for rejection, but a criterion of integration. All of the above must necessarily apply, otherwise the application will be rejected.

☐ No.

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

1. A copy of the penal record.
2. A certificate that his/her deportation from the country has not been ordered.
3. A certificate that there is no other pending issues of his/her status of legal residence in the country.
4. A certificate that there are no public or national security reasons for the applicant.

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.

The applicant’s economic situation is indirectly checked, both as a prerequisite for the issuance of most of the residence permits, and as a criterion for his/her integration into the economic and social life.

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

There is no provision in the Law.
Q17. Is the third-country national’s housing situation taken into account?

☐ Yes.

☒ No.

The housing situation is indirectly checked during the issuance of prerequisite residence permits and may be a criterion for social integration.

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

There is no provision in the Law.

Q18. Are there any other requirements not listed above?

☐ Yes.

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☒ No.

Section 2.3 Security

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

☒ Yes.

According to Article 5 of the Greek Nationality Code, a foreigner cannot be naturalized in case:

a. He/she has been irrevocably sentenced:

i) In a sentence of deprivation of freedom of at least one year, in the last decade prior to the application for naturalization, for an offense committed intentionally.

ii) In a sentence of deprivation of freedom of at least six months, irrespective of the time of issue of the conviction decision, for any of the offenses listed in par 1. Sect. b of Article 5, of that article.

b. An expulsion from the country has been ordered for him/her or there is other pending issue regarding his legal residence status in the Country.

c. There are public or national security reasons concerning the applicant (Article 5B of the Greek Nationality Code).

☐ No.

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

The naturalization requirements, both formal and substantive, as described in Section 2, generally apply to all categories of foreigners, except that of expatriate foreigners (co-ethnics). For some specific categories, as listed below, there are some minor differences that mainly concern the time of residence in Greece required, the naturalization fee, as well as the exemption from submitting some supporting documents, etc. and not the procedure itself. More specifically:

Q20a. Refugees (and stateless persons)

Recognized political refugees and stateless persons are required to previously reside in Greece for the last 3 previous years (instead of 7 years) in order to apply for naturalization. Also, for this category, the fee for naturalization is 100 euros (instead of 550 euros). Furthermore, if the foreigner is unable to provide a birth certificate from the country of origin, he/she shall be exempted from the submission of such supporting document and the act of recognition as a political refugee or his/her card as a stateless person respectively shall suffice.
Q20b. Other beneficiaries of international protection statuses
The recipient of subsidiary protection may be exempted from the obligation to submit a birth certificate from his country of origin (if it is not possible) and in such a case, similarly to the above, the act of subjecting him/her to subsidiary protection status is sufficient.

Q20c. Specific categories of legal migrants e.g. people with disabilities or people in old age
According to par. 4 of article 6 of the Greek Nationality Code, as added by article 33 par. 4 of Law 4604/2019, foreigners lacking legal capacity may be represented, for submitting an application and declaration of naturalization, by the person who has been legally designated as their legal supporter. In this case, Article 9 of the Greek Nationality Code is not applied, ie they are exempted from the obligation to take an oath in order to complete their naturalization process.

Q20d. Other groups that are significantly represented in your Member State (e.g. stateless persons, minors, investors, citizens of neighbouring countries).
A large category of foreigners who acquire Greek citizenship by naturalization are the expatriate foreigners (co-ethnics), ie those who have Greek (ethnic) origin. For them, naturalization is possible even if they are permanently residing abroad (Article 10 of the Greek Nationality Code: Naturalisation of Foreign Nationals of Greek Origin who live abroad) by submitting a request to the Greek Consular Authority of their place of residence.

For co-ethnics that reside in Greece there are special provisions for naturalization. They mainly concern expatriates from Albania with a specific type of residence permit in the country (article 23 of Law 3838/2010) and the former USSR (article 39 of Law 4604/2019) and depending on the provisions of the law, to which the expatriate foreigner is subject, more specific terms and conditions of naturalization may be applied. Indicatively, some of these differentiations (as opposed to the “ordinary” naturalization) that may be applied accordingly, are the following:

- Possession of any type of residence permit in the country
- Fee of 100 euros instead of 550 euros
- No time period requirement (of prior residence in the country) for the submission of the naturalization application
- Exemption from the interview before the Naturalization Committee.
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.

The following procedure, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 of the Greek Nationality Code as amended by the provisions of Articles 33 and 34 respectively, is as follows:

a. The applicant submits a naturalization declaration to the Municipality of the area where he/she permanently resides. They then submit an application for naturalization to the Regional Directorate or the Department of Citizenship of the Regional Directorate of Citizenship to which the Municipality of his/her permanent residence belongs. The above is accompanied by the following supporting documents:
   1. Exact copy of a valid passport or other travel document or other proof of identity
   2. A copy of the legal residence permit in force, as those titles are defined in Article 5 par. 1e of the Greek Nationality Code, as amended in force,
   3. Birth certificate or other equivalent certificate, as provided by the legislation, of the country of his/her first citizenship.
   4. Tax declaration statement of the years corresponding to the years of prior legal residence in the country, required per case, according to which his/her tax obligation as a resident of Greece is proved.
   5. Social Security registration number (AMKA).
   6. A 550 euros fee. Expatriates, holders of citizenship of a Member State of the European Union, as well as recognized political refugees and stateless persons must pay a fee of 100 euros accompanying each of their application. This fee in cases of resubmission of the naturalization application is limited to 200 euros.

b. The check for the completion of the file and the fulfilment of formal naturalization conditions, follows. Once the formal requirements are met, an electronic search of the penal record, certificate of non-deportation and public order and security reasons follows. Before inviting the foreigner to be tested before the competent Naturalization Committee, the competent Regional Directorate or the Department of Citizenship requests from the applicant his/her supporting documents, proving that he/she is still resides of Greece after submitting the naturalization application. If it is found that the continuity of the applicant’s stay is interrupted, Article 7A of the Greek Nationality Code shall be applied. If it is ascertained that the applicant permanently resides in the country, he/she is called to be examined before the relevant Naturalization Committee, in order to ascertain whether the applicant meets the substantive requirements (sufficient knowledge of the Greek language, economic, social and political integration).

If the Committee determines that the applicant fulfils the substantive requirements, a naturalization decision is issued by the Secretary General of Citizenship “By order of the Minister of Interior” which is published in the Government Gazette and the naturalization is completed with the foreigner’s oath.

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

☐ Yes.

According to the provisions of Article 11 of the Greek Nationality Code, children of a foreigner who is naturalized, become Greeks, without any other formality, if they are minors and unmarried at the time of naturalization.

☐ No.

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.

1. The Municipality of the permanent residence of the applicant for the submission of a naturalization declaration.
2. The Regional Directorate or the Department of Citizenship of the Regional Directorate of Citizenship of the Ministry of Interior, to which the Municipality of the permanent residence belongs, for the submission of the naturalization application and the accompanying documents.
3. Ministry of Citizen Protection for the provision of information related to public or national security reasons, issuing of non-deportation certificate, legality of residence.
4. Ministry of Justice for the issuance of the penal record certificate and the provision of information (court decisions, etc.).
5. Central Directorate of Citizenship of the Ministry of Interior (decision of the Secretary General of Citizenship “by order of the Minister of the Interior”, referral to the Citizenship Council, examination of the objections by the Citizenship Council over a rejection decision, provision of instructions, answers to questions, etc.).
6. National Printing House for the publication of the naturalization decision.
7. The Municipality for the registration of the naturalized individual.
Q23. Are these procedures digitised? Can applications for citizenship be made online?

☐ Yes.

☐ No.

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 documents required for the submission of the application are (See also. Q21):

1. Exact copy of a valid passport or other travel document or other proof of identity,
2. A copy of the legal residence permit in force, as those titles are defined in Article 5 par. 1e of the Greek Nationality Code, as amended and in force,
3. Birth certificate or other equivalent certificate, as provided by the legislation, of the country of his/her first citizenship,
4. Tax declaration statement of the years corresponding to the years of prior legal residence in the country, required per case, according to which his/her tax obligation as a resident of Greece is proved,
5. Social Security registration number (AMKA),
6. A 550 euros fee. Expatriates, holders of citizenship of a Member State of the European Union, as well as recognized political refugees and stateless persons must pay a fee of 100 euros accompanying each of their application. This fee in cases of resubmission of the naturalization application is limited to 200 euros.

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?

According to the provisions of Article 31 of the Greek Nationality Code, as ratified by Law 3284/2004, and replaced by Article 12 of Law 3838/2010:

“For the naturalisation the following specific deadlines, starting from the submission of the application, are issued:

a. Six months from the submission of the application for naturalisation to the Prefecture to the invitation of the person concerned for interview before the Naturalisation Committee. Within that period the competent authority of the Prefecture is obliged to seek ex officio for the supporting documents that are mentioned in sect. a of paragraph 2 of Article 7, as well as for the opinion of the competent security services of the Ministry of Citizen Protection. If the application for naturalisation is not complete, the deadline starts from the time of completion of the relevant file or from the resubmission of the application in full. Any delay in sending of the ex officio sought supporting documents does not suspend further examination of the file.

b. Four months from the invitation of the applicant for interview to the submission of the opinion of the Committee to the Minister of the Interior.

c. Two months for the issuance of the relevant ministerial decision and its publication in the Government Gazette.

3. If the procedure cannot be completed within the above-mentioned deadline, the competent authority sends a written notification to the applicant, on the reasons for the delay. The relevant document is also forwarded to the Minister of the Interior who may order the prioritisation of the completion of the procedure within the prescribed time frame.

4. The above-mentioned deadlines, as well as the whole naturalisation procedure are suspended due to penal trials for offences punishable by deprivation of freedom of more than a year, as well as for other offences, the conviction for which constitutes obstacle to naturalisation. The submission of objections to the Citizenship Council by the applicant and the forwarding of the case to the Citizenship Council by the Minister also have suspensive effect.”

In practice the procedures exceed the above deadlines, mainly due to the high volume of cases and the small number of officials. The actual time for the completion of the application, depends on a number of factors (workload of the Regional Directorate of Citizenship where the application is submitted, e.g. in large urban centers, delays are greater due to the concentration of many applications, file completeness, political/administrative changes that could cause delays in procedures, etc.).

We note that:

In exceptional cases, bypassing the principle of time priority is justified restrictively and is subject to approval in the following cases of naturalization applications: 1. Due to attendance and studies in a Greek school or a school that follows a Greek compulsory programme of education in Greece. 2. For health reasons exclusively related to the applicant, his/her spouse and the applicant’s minor children at the time of the submission of the acceleration application. 3. For treatment of a cure requiring hospitalization abroad, if there is a decision of the country’s Supreme Health Council.
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 provisions of Article 6 of the Greek Nationality Code as amended by Article 33 of Law 4604/2019 include the payment of a 550 euros fee. Expatriates, holders of citizenship of a Member State of the European Union, as well as recognized political refugees and stateless persons must pay a fee of 100 euros accompanying each of their application. This fee in cases of resubmission of the naturalization application is limited to 200 euros. Appeals before the Citizenship Council against the negative opinion of the competent Naturalization Committee require a fee of 100 euros (Article 7 of the Greek Nationality Code, as replaced by Article 34 of Law 4604/2019).

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)?

According to Article 7A of the Greek Nationality Code, as added under Article 35 of Law 4604/2010:

If it is found that, the applicant does not reside permanently in the country after submitting the application for naturalization and until he/she is called to be examined (before the Naturalisation Committee), in accordance with Article 7, the application shall be rejected by the Minister of the Interior, subject to paragraph 2.

2. "The application for naturalization shall not be rejected in accordance with paragraph 1, but the procedure shall be suspended by the competent Regional Citizenship Directorate, upon the applicant’s request, as long as it is found that during the period from the submission of the application till the call (of the applicant) before the Naturalization Committee, one of the following conditions are met:
(a) the applicant resides outside Greece for a time period that does not exceed the eighteen (18) months and continues to maintain biotic relations with the country,
(b) the applicant resides outside Greece for study reasons,
(c) the applicant resides outside Greece for reasons of force majeure and in particular for serious health reasons relating to him/her.
The decision to suspend the process shall be notified immediately to the applicant”.

3. Upon application of the person concerned, the process, which was suspended according to paragraph 2, shall be continued when the applicant has again made Greece his/her country of permanent residence for a period equal to that of his absence”.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 7B as added in the Greek Nationality Code under Article 36 of Law 4604/2019:

1. In the case where the competent Regional Directorate of Citizenship doubts the fulfilment of the requirements of Article 7A, the Regional Director of Citizenship shall refer the matter, before the foreign applicant is called for the examination, to the Citizenship Council, in order for it to deliver an opinion, after proposition of the Central Directorate of Citizenship.
2. In the case of doubts by the Regional Directorate of Citizenship regarding the existence or non-existence of grounds of public order and national security, in accordance with Article 5B, the Regional Director of Citizenship shall refer the matter to the Minister of the Interior to issue a decision. The Minister of the Interior may refer the matter to the Citizenship Council to advise accordingly.
3. If the Minister of Interior doubts the correctness of the assessment of the Naturalization Committee; he/she may refer the matter to the Citizenship Council for an opinion.”

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

There is a discretion of the deciding body (Minister of the Interior), but usually it is in line with the recommendation of the citizenship services and the competent Naturalization Committee, which ascertains the degree of economic, social and political integration in the country, as well as the adequacy of the knowledge of the Greek language. Discretion is also institutionally limited due to the obligation, under the Code of Administrative Procedure, to justify decisions, as well as due to the ground for judicial dispute.

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

1. Change of name/surname data of the applicants.
2. The different way in which their names are written in the documents that concern them.
3. The use of false identification documents (passport, birth certificate, marriage certificate, etc.)
4. Falsification of their identification documents.

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17 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.
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.

In accordance with paragraph 2 of article 8 of the Greek Nationality Code, as amended by paragraph 5 of article 31 of L. 4531/2018: “...2. The decision on naturalization application shall be justified in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure”. Therefore, there is a possibility of a judicial review of the correctness of a negative decision, mainly as far as its completeness and consistency of its justification is concerned. Also, before the issuing of the decision, the applicant may appeal to the Citizenship Council by submitting objections to the Naturalization Committee’s opinion. In particular, paragraph 6 of Article 7 of the Greek Nationality Code provides the following: “…6. The Naturalization Committee prepares a detailed report with the questions submitted and the answers given by the those who appeared before the Committee for examination. Thereafter, the opinion of the Naturalization Committee shall be notified to the applicant who has the right to submit his/her written objections before the Citizenship Council, within a time limit of fifteen (15) days. Detailed judgments and actual facts and evidence concerning public or national security matters, that are contained in the recommendation, are not communicated to the person concerned. For the appeal to the Citizenship Council a fee of one hundred (100) euros is required.”.

In case of a negative decision on the naturalization application, made by the Minister of Interior, there is the right to submit a new application one (1) year later.

☐ No.

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.

1. Failure to meet the essential legal requirements (sufficient knowledge of the language, integration into the economic, social and political life of the country).
2. Failure to complete the required, per case, time of permanent legal residence.
3. The existence of a penal impediment.
4. Reasons of public or national security.
5. Non-appearance of applicants before the competent Naturalization Committee for the examination.

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

☒ Yes.

There is a compulsory oath within one (1) year after the publication of the naturalization decision in the Government Gazette, which is the festive form that completes the naturalization (Article 9 of Law 3284/2004). Without the oath, the naturalization is considered incomplete. The oath given reads as follows: “I swear to keep faith in the Homeland, obey the Constitution and the laws of the State and to conscientiously fulfill my duties as a Greek citizen”.

☐ No.

Support provided during the application process

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

☒ Yes.

a) The website of the Ministry of Interior offers information/explanation on the procedures of acquiring Greek citizenship in many languages, and all relevant laws and circulars related to the institutional framework of citizenship are also available on the website.18

b) Information is provided by all, central and regional, citizenship services (via telephone and in written).

☐ No.

18 https://www.ypes.gr/g-g-ithageneias/
Q34. Is governmental support provided to applicants during the application process? **Yes.**

- a) Regional Citizenship Services assist through the distribution of printed material and information delivery.
- b) The Central Directorate of Citizenship provides information (via telephone, in written and in person) to interested individuals and/or to their legal representatives regarding their application, as well as guidelines (circulars, answers to questions, etc.) to the Regional Citizenship Services, regarding the correct implementation of the Greek Nationality Code. The Central Citizenship Directorate also has a nationwide call center.
- c) The website of the Ministry of Interior hosts an electronic application for the monitoring of the process of a naturalization application, by filling in the competent service (where the application was filed), applicant’s file number and personal data (name/surname) [20](http://pf.emigrants.ypes.gr/pfiua/)

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.

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19 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.

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.

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?

☐ Yes.

☒ No.

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.

On Greece’s side, there is no requirement to be fulfilled by third-country nationals, regarding the acquisition of Greek citizenship and simultaneously keeping their other foreign nationality/ies.

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.

Q40. If your Member State allows dual/multiple citizenships, have there been any particular benefits or challenges that this policy has brought?

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

Positives: Retain the privileges of citizenships of both (2) countries.

Negatives: i) Conflict of law/what is the applicable law in civil, personal or other matters of dispute, and ii) Possession of two (2) different passports in force, which may enable them to evade authority checks, especially if there are identification issues (i.e. if there are differences in names, e.g. in some countries women get their spouse’s surname after marriage, while in Greece they do not).
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?

- Yes.
- No.

In the National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (July 2019), in the proposed action no. 3.6.9 “Targeted Policies for “Second Generation” third-country nationals”, states that a specific target group that needs targeted policies, is the “second generation” third-country nationals, that is to say, youths with migrant backgrounds who are Greek citizens or youths born or raised in our country without Greek citizenship. These individuals have a lower educational and financial profile more often than their native counterparts. At the same time, they have high rates of early school leaving and unemployment while facing xenophobic and racist behaviors. The actions of this axis are aimed at providing support to second-generation third-country nationals and preparing them for the procedure of obtaining the Greek citizenship.

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 is no evidence from any relevant research or evaluation.

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:

- The main differences are that anyone who acquires Greek citizenship has all the rights deriving from the Greek citizenship, such as: the possibility of being hired in the public sector, participation in national and local elections, access to benefits exclusively for Greek citizens, but also has obligations, such as obligatory military service duty for men.

Q43a. Participation in regional or national elections.

- Yes.

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

- Yes, in the narrow public sector (e.g. Armed Forces, Police) and in some closed professions.

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

- Yes. Access to benefits which are exclusive for Greek citizens.

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 good practices yet, nor specialized support is provided to the new citizen, after being granted citizenship, so as to respond to the new reality.

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 is no specific and specialized information material and campaigns or other support measures, as naturalized people are considered Greek citizens.
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.

There is no official data. But there are indications deriving from the individual’s naturalization file, suggesting that the motive for acquiring Greek citizenship is, for many applicants, the potential to move within the EU (e.g. in requests for speeding up the procedure, the most common reasons that are projected are: seeking work in another country or leaving for studies or health reasons).
Section 6: Conclusions

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:

According to the statistical office of the European Union (EUROSTAT), about 850,000 people became citizens of an EU Member State in 2017, most of them in Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

The study focuses on citizenship issues and covers the acquisition of citizenship by third country nationals. Regarding citizenship acquisition policies and legislation, the study highlighted the most recent developments, focusing on 2019, with emphasis on the last five years. In terms of statistics, the study covered a period of five years, from 2014 to 2018.

The present EMN study attempted to map the process of citizenship acquisition for third-country nationals in Greece. This study included a summary of terms and conditions for naturalization (e.g. legal residence, language proficiency, financial status, etc.), as well as the administrative procedures that are followed, which determine in which case a person is eligible for citizenship. The study also examined whether multiple citizenship is permitted and, if so, under what conditions. The purpose of the study was also to explore the way to associate citizenship acquisition and integration policies, and whether naturalization is considered the end point of the integration process or whether citizenship aims to facilitate integration.

The acquisition of citizenship is not provided for in the Constitution of Greece. The main legal instrument covering the acquisition of citizenship of third country nationals in Greece is the Greek Nationality Code (GNC) (KEI in Greek) (L. 3284/2004) and its amendments (listed as most important: Law 3838/2010, Law 4332/2015 and Law 4604/2019). The Greek Nationality Code constituted a consolidation and codification of provisions that had been dispersed in various Greek laws since 1955. Particularly with Law 3838/2010 and the recent Law 4604/2019, which are amendments to the existing GNC (KEI in Greek), new frameworks were created for the acquisition of Greek citizenship for various population groups (e.g. acquisition of Greek citizenship by second generation immigrants, extending the application of the ius soli principle to the third generation of immigrants, former USSR expatriates, etc.), while the naturalization process was further rationalised by the introduction of significant innovations (deadlines, reduction of fees and time required to stay in Greece, obligation for justification of a negative decision, etc.). Law 4332/2015 updated and adjusted the existing framework for the acquisition of Greek citizenship for the second generation immigrants. More specifically, these provisions enable the acquisition of Greek citizenship for children of foreign nationals who legally and permanently reside in the country due to:

a) birth in Greece and attendance of a Greek school in Greece.
b) successful completion of nine years of study in Primary and Secondary Education or six years of Secondary Education in a Greek school in Greece
c) graduation from a Greek University, under the condition of having a secondary education diploma from a Greek school in Greece. The aforementioned provisions brought a number of decisive changes to the Greek Nationality Code, mainly aiming at ensuring the smooth development and integration into the Greek society of foreign children that are born or raised in Greece and of their families.

Acquisition of Greek citizenship constitutes acquisition of European citizenship, consequently the individual enjoys all rights and has the same obligations as a Greek and European national.

In order to deliver an opinion to the Minister of the Interior, the Naturalization Committee invites the foreigner/s to an interview in order to determine both his/her adequate knowledge of the Greek language and his/her proper integration into the economic and social life of the country, as well as and the possibility of meaningful and active participation in the political life of the country.

The integration of third-country nationals has become an important policy issue in Greece. The timing, the way and under which circumstances a third-country national can acquire citizenship, form an essential dimension of the integration process. Citizenship acquisition can be considered as the final step in a person’s successful integration process, as an incentive for that person to become part of the new society, and as a tool of integration itself (especially for foreign children). Granting citizenship is a privilege to be exercised with respect to EU law, and the Greek State is solely responsible for determining the conditions for the acquisition of Greek citizenship on its territory. However, citizens of a EU Membe-State enjoy the rights of European citizenship including mobility and free movement within the EU, and consequently, determining how to obtain citizenship in each EU Member State poses a responsibility also towards the other Member States, since citizenship has also an important European dimension.
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.