



European  
University  
Institute

ROBERT  
SCHUMAN  
CENTRE FOR  
ADVANCED  
STUDIES



CITIZENSHIP



# ACCESS TO CITIZENSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

## HANDBOOK FOR SPAIN

# ACCESS TO CITIZENSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

## HANDBOOK FOR SPAIN

Prepared by the Migration Policy Group in cooperation  
with CIDOB

**Editor:** Jasper Dag Tjaden (Migration Policy Group)

**Co-editor:** Elena Sánchez-Montijano (CIDOB)

This report was produced in the context of the project '**Access to Citizenship and its Impact on Immigrant Integration (ACIT)**' co-funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Non-EU immigrants (European Commission Grant Agreement: HOME/2010/EIFX/CA/1774).

*We like to thank all reviewers, including Iseult Honohan (University College Dublin), Kristen Jeffers (University College London), Elena Sánchez-Montijano (CIDOB) with the assistance of Covadonga González Pujol (CIDOB) and the EUDO country expert for Spain, Francisco Javier Moreno.*

## INTRODUCTION

The project ‘**Access to Citizenship and its Impact on Immigrant Integration (ACIT)**’ funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Non-EU Immigrants provides a new evidence base for comparing different elements of citizenship in Europe.

The five consortium partners (the European University Institute, the Migration Policy Group, University College Dublin, University of Edinburgh and Maastricht University) have developed **four sets of citizenship indicators** on citizenship laws, their implementation, shares of citizenship acquisition among foreign-born immigrants and citizenship’s impact on integration for all 27 EU Member States, accession candidates (Croatia, Iceland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey) and European Economic Area countries (Norway, Switzerland).

The outcomes of this research were presented to politicians, civil servants, members of civil society and academics in ten EU Member States (Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom) in order to **use this information to improve their policies and practices**. Citizenship stakeholders were asked to share their insights about which factors influence naturalisation rates, on the impact of citizenship on integration, on past and future policy changes and on the political environment for citizenship reform. These ‘**national roundtables**’ were a key element of this research as the national stakeholders had the opportunity to interpret the results and give meaning to the numbers.

The Migration Policy Group produced this **handbook** based on the results from the citizenship indicators and the responses of national stakeholders at the national roundtable. It provides a snapshot of how the vast amount of data of this project can be used for national policy debates. All citizenship stakeholders, be they policymakers, academics, non-governmental organisations or others, can go online and create their own graphs, dig into the data and use this information for presentations, debates or publications.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> All the results are accessible through an **interactive online tool and comparative reports**. For more information on the background and methodology see appendix and visit <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>. For more detailed information on Spanish citizenship law and the naturalisation procedures see the EUDO country profile at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/country-profiles/?country=Spain>.

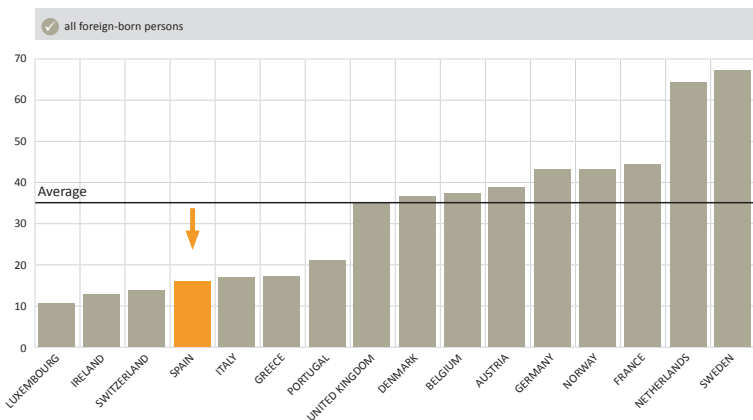
# 1. CITIZENSHIP ACQUISITION INDICATORS: WHO BECOMES A CITIZEN?

How likely are foreign born immigrants to become citizens in Europe and how long does it take them? Citizenship Acquisition Indicators measure the share of foreign-born immigrants (aged 16-74) in 2008 that have acquired citizenship as well as the number of years between arrival in the country of residence and the acquisition of citizenship.<sup>2</sup>

**Overall, only 16% of foreign born immigrants in Spain have become citizens.** This share is significantly lower than the EU-15 average of 34%. This low share of citizenship acquisition can be explained by several factors, including Spain's status as a recent country of immigration. Spain has two different tracks to citizenship. Immigrants from countries with historical links to Spain are required two year residence in the country in order to be eligible for naturalisation.<sup>3</sup> Immigrants from all other countries must wait 10 years, which is with one of the most stringent resident requirements in the EU (MIPEX 2011: 22-23).<sup>4</sup>

The acquisition of citizenship varies considerably across the EU. Between 60% and 70% of foreign-born immigrants are citizens of the destination country in Sweden and the Netherlands. Other than Spain, less than 20% are citizens in Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Ireland and Luxemburg.

## Share of naturalised persons among first generation in EU-15, Switzerland and Norway in 2008



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

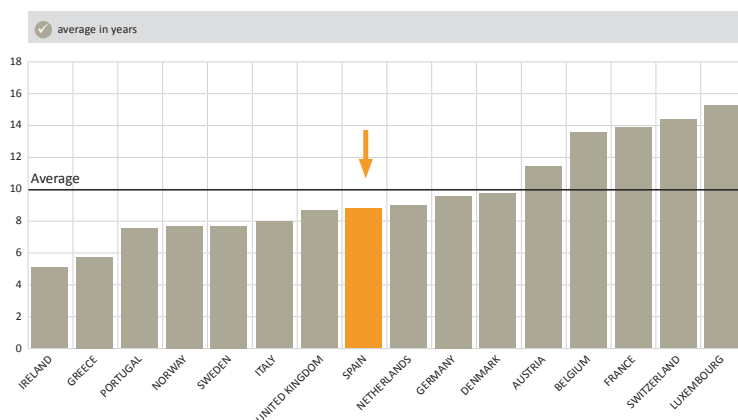
2 See methodological appendix for more information.

3 Civil Code approved by Royal Decree the 24th of July 1889, modified in several occasions. The exception applies to citizens of Latin American countries, Andorra, Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Portugal.

4 Huddleston et al. (2011) Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). Brussels: British Council and Migration Policy Group.

It takes foreign-born immigrants on average nine years to become citizens in Spain which is around the average for EU-15 countries, Norway and Switzerland.<sup>5</sup> As the **Immigrant Citizen Survey (ICS)** (p. 78)<sup>6</sup> shows migrants from countries with historical ties spend, on average, at least 6 years living in the country before applying for citizenship, compared to 10 years from the rest. In EU-15 countries (without Finland), Norway and Switzerland, it takes on average 10 years. In Ireland and Greece it takes immigrants on average less than 6 years from arrival in the country to the acquisition of citizenship. In contrast, foreign born immigrants in Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Luxembourg take around 14 years to become citizens.

## Speed of naturalisation in EU-15, Switzerland and Norway



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

What explains why immigrants become citizens in Europe and how much time it takes? The analysis concludes that residence, immigrants' country of origin, gender, background (education, employment and family status among others), and policies are determining factors to apply for citizenship.

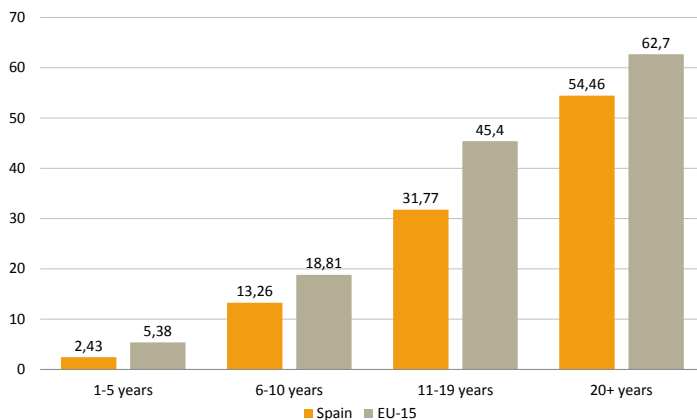
**Firstly, residence matters.** One reason for the below-average share of naturalised persons in Spain is the country's status as a recent country of immigration. Immigrants in Spain are more often 'recent' arrivals than immigrants in longer established countries of immigration in Europe. Our multivariate analysis<sup>7</sup> shows that **the longer immigrants have settled in a country, the more likely they are to become citizens.** As is the case in most other EU-15 countries, the share of naturalised immigrants in Spain increases with residence in the country. However, the increase is not as great as in other EU-15 countries. The ICS (p. 79) further illustrates the particularity of the Spanish case regarding residence for the groups with historical ties and facilitated residence requirements. 91% of the latter have become Spanish citizens, compared to only 73% of the countries without historical ties.

5 This includes all foreign born immigrants regardless of their country of origin.

6 Huddleston, T. and Tjaden, J. D. (2012) *Immigrant Citizen Survey*. Barcelona: CIDOB

7 For additional methodological clarifications please see Vink et al. (2012)

## Share of naturalised persons by years of residence



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

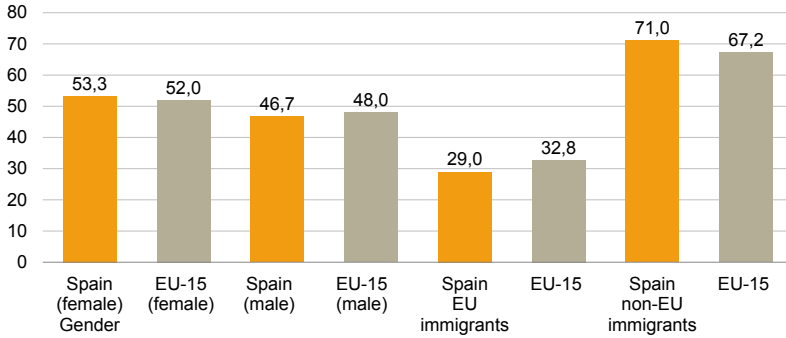
**Secondly, immigrants' origin country plays a major role.** The foreign born population that emigrated from less economically developed countries tends to naturalise more often in Europe and in Spain than immigrants from higher developed countries. Immigrants coming from medium and under-developed countries<sup>8</sup> are on average 2.5 times more likely to be citizens than those coming from highly developed countries. Immigrants from less developed countries also take longer to acquire citizenship than immigrants from higher developed countries.

Across EU countries, the role of immigrants' origin can also be reflected in the different results for EU and non-EU citizens. In fact, in Spain immigrants from outside the EU (on average from lower developed countries) are roughly 11% more likely than EU citizens to have become citizens of their country of residence. This difference is smaller than 10% in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland; but it is larger than 30% in the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. This is also reflected in the figure below where non-EU immigrants show higher naturalisation rates accounting for over two-thirds of the total. These rates are slightly above the EU-15 average for immigrants from non-EU countries, and respectively slightly below in the case of EU nationals taking up the Spanish nationality.

**Thirdly, gender matters. Foreign-born women are usually more likely to be citizens than men.** This is also the case in Spain. As the figure shows, more than half of the immigrants that become citizens are women (53.3%, versus 46.7% men), figures in line with the EU-15 average.

<sup>8</sup> We use data from the Human Development Index (HDI), which is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standard of living for countries worldwide (United Nations Development Programme, 2000).

## Acquisition rates in Spain, by origin country and gender



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

**Fourthly, immigrants' background matters.** Education, employment, family status and the use of language are additional factors that influence the acquisition of citizenship. Across most EU-15 countries, immigrants from less developed countries who have at least secondary education are about 42% more likely to naturalise than those with only primary education. Immigrants from both developing and developed countries are more likely to be citizens if they speak the country of residence's language at home, if they are married, and if they are employed.

**Policies matter:** While these individual factors do play a role, **citizenship laws significantly influence how many immigrants become citizens because they determine the conditions under which immigrants can choose to naturalise.**

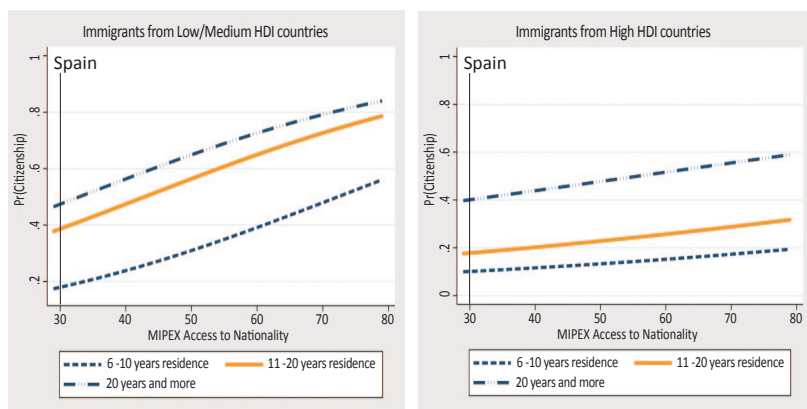
One example is the acceptance of multiple nationality: Immigrants from less developed countries that reside in EU countries that accept dual citizenship are 40% more likely to be citizens of the country of residence.<sup>9</sup>

More importantly, inclusive citizenship laws in the country of residence have a major effect on whether or not immigrants naturalise:<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Multiple nationality must be tolerated by both the country of origin and the country of residence.

<sup>10</sup> Policies are measured by an adjusted score of the Migrant Integration Policy Index, see [www.mipex.eu/](http://www.mipex.eu/)

## Probability of citizenship acquisition in EU-15 countries<sup>11</sup>



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

This figure shows how policies affect immigrants' uptake of citizenship on average in EU-15 countries, Norway and Switzerland.<sup>12</sup> **Citizenship policies matter more for immigrants from less developed countries, especially for newcomers** (as the three lines in on the left are steeper than the lines for immigrants from higher developed countries on the right). As for immigrants coming from highly developed countries, they are not only less likely to acquire citizenship, but whether or not they do so also seems to depend on fewer factors that go beyond the time of residence in the country.

These findings indicate that the very low acquisition rates for Spain are in line with what would be expected on the basis of the inaccessible citizenship policy. Sweden with an adjusted MIPEX score of 78, has acquisition rates among first generation immigrants nearly four times as high compared to the Spain (67% in Sweden vs. 16% in Spain). This indicates the potential for naturalisation rates to improve, if naturalisation would become more accessible (Vink et al. 2012).

### Results from the National Roundtable<sup>13</sup>

Both policies and the country of origin are influential factors determining immigrants' uptake of citizenship. These two factors are especially important in the Spanish case. Immigrants from countries with historical links to Spain are required two year residence in the country in order to be eligible for naturalisation. For immigrants

11 The horizontal axis in the graph represents the 'openness' of citizenship laws across EU countries. The vertical axis represents the probability that foreign born immigrants are citizens. This analysis used pooled data from the European Social Survey (2002-2010) available for 16 Western European countries (EU-15, minus Italy, plus Norway and Switzerland). The graph shows that citizenship laws have a different effect for immigrants from different countries and with different length of duration in the country.

12 Citizenship policies are measured according to MIPEX (2011: 187) access to nationality for first generation on a scale from 0 to 100 (Spain = 39).

13 The Spanish national roundtable was organised by the 'Centre for International Affairs' (CIDOB). For more information see methodological annex.



from all other countries this requirement is 10 years. This has an effect on citizenship acquisition shares and, in particular, the time it takes on average to become a citizen. In general, the time that it takes for an individual to naturalise in Spain often far exceeds minimum residence requirements due to delays in the administrative procedure. Initiatives have been taken to reduce the backlog of naturalisation claims.

*I was surprised when I have seen the time for Spain (9 years to become a citizen, according to the citizen acquisition indicators data) because the minimum perceived time of the population and in personal records are much higher. 15 and even 19 are figures which are being handled. I think that has to do with the distortion of the 2 years and the 10 years for nationality depending on the group.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

*It has recurrently been said, law is one discussion, but efficient management is absolutely necessary. That is, the debate on the 10 or 5 years would not lose its importance if the person could get a passport, like you just said M2 (Civil Servant), with very short notice. So it is completely absurd that it takes two years of residence and then one and a half years, just to get an appointment.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, Civil Servant)

## 2. CITIZENSHIP LAW INDICATORS: WHAT ARE IMMIGRANTS' LEGAL OPPORTUNITIES TO BECOME A CITIZEN?

Since citizenship policies influence why more immigrants become citizens in one country and not the other, what are the legal opportunities and obstacles that they face in Europe? Citizenship Law Indicators describe and compare legal rules for birthright acquisition, naturalisation and loss of citizenship across countries and over time. Indicators measure degrees of inclusion and individual choice on a 0 to 1 scale.<sup>14</sup> The provisions of citizenship laws have different target groups, such as immigrants, native born, emigrants, family members of citizens or stateless persons. A score of close to 1 indicates that the legal rules are relatively inclusive for the respective target group or allow more choice of citizenship status to its members, whereas a score close to 0 indicates more exclusion or lack of individual choice.

**Overall, Spain's citizenship regime is not more restrictive than in most EU countries with the exception of opportunities for renunciation of Spanish citizenship.**<sup>15</sup>

Spain provides full access to citizenship to those born to a Spanish mother or father (*ius sanguinis*) regardless of birth inside or outside the country. Acquisition of citizenship based on birth in the Spanish territory (*ius soli*) is available at birth for foundlings, stateless children, and for child born to a foreign parent who was also born in Spain (double *ius soli*). Children born in Spain to foreign-born parents are entitled to citizenship after one year of residence in the country (*ius soli* after birth). Spain does not permit the renunciation of Spanish citizenship by persons resident in the country; renunciation of Spanish citizenship is only possible when the individual lives abroad and has another citizenship.<sup>16</sup> Though it is comparatively difficult to renounce Spanish citizenship, Spanish citizenship can be involuntarily lost more easily than in most EU-15 countries. Involuntary loss is possible in the case of residence abroad, acquisition of another citizenship, fraudulent acquisition, military or other service for a foreign country or failure to renounce citizenship.

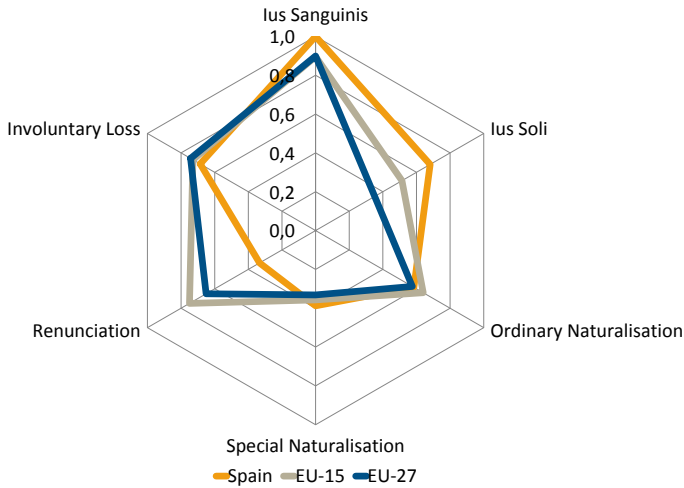
---

14 See methodological appendix for more information.

15 For a more comprehensive overview of Spanish citizenship law see the EUDO country profile for Spain available at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/country-profiles/?country=Spain>.

16 This condition also applies to the citizens of countries with historical ties. Check note 4.

## Overall results of the Citizenship Law Indicators in Spain, EU-15 and EU-27



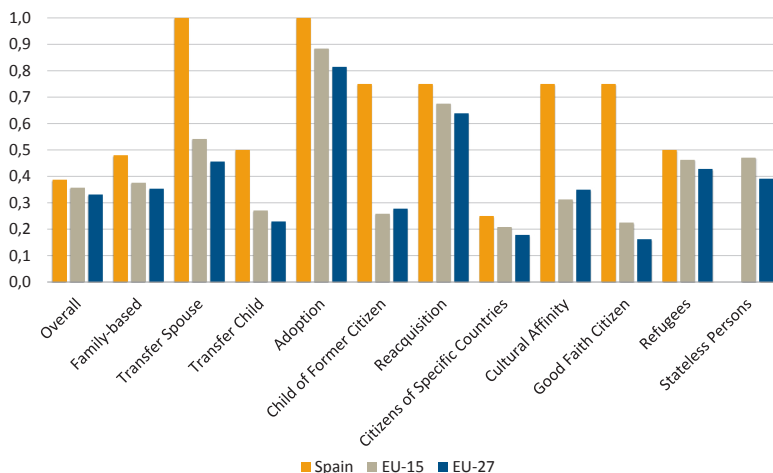
Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

**Compared to other EU countries, Spain offers slightly more inclusive preferential access to citizenship for certain groups**, with the important exception of stateless persons. Spouses of Spanish citizens are entitled to citizenship after one year of marriage to a citizen and one year of residence in Spain (spousal transfer) if they show ‘adequate social integration’, make an oath of loyalty to the King and obedience to the Spanish Constitution and the laws, renounce their prior citizenship,<sup>17</sup> and do not pose a threat to national security. Children of Spanish citizens (or children under legal guardianship of a Spanish citizen) are entitled to citizenship if they have been resident in the country for one year, and satisfy the additional conditions previously mentioned (child transfer). Children adopted by a Spanish citizen automatically acquire Spanish citizenship. Foreign-born grandchildren of Spanish citizens are also entitled to Spanish citizenship after one year of residence (additional conditions apply) (descendants of citizens).<sup>18</sup> As previously mentioned, nationals of Latin American countries, Andorra, Philippines, Equatorial Guinea, Portugal or individuals of Sephardic origin are entitled to citizenship after two years of residence. Spain also offers privileged access to citizenship to refugees and individuals presumed for many years to have been citizens of Spain. Notably, there are currently no regulations for preferential access to citizenship for stateless persons.

17 There are some exceptions; for further clarification see note 4.

18 These rights are recognised as part of the Historical Memory Act No. 52/2007 of 26 December, which acknowledges and broadens rights, and establishes measures, for those who suffered persecution or violence during the civil war and the period of dictatorship.

## Provisions for 'special naturalisation' in Spain, EU-15 and EU-27



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

**In contrast to these forms of special naturalisation, Spain creates slightly more legal obstacles to ordinary naturalisation than most EU-15 countries.**<sup>19</sup> Although Spain is one of only four EU countries in which residence based naturalisation is an entitlement once conditions are fulfilled, demanding residence requirements, discretionary economic resource conditions, as well as stringent criminal record requirements set Spain apart from other EU-15 countries.

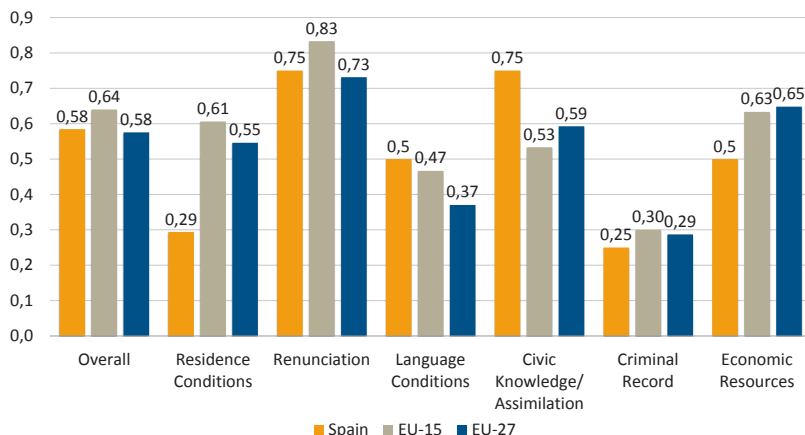
To qualify for naturalisation, immigrants in Spain must continuously and legally reside in Spain for 2 years (for immigrants from countries with historical ties to Spain) or for 10 years (for all other immigrants). The ten-year-residence requirement is longer than in most other EU countries, with very few exceptions, such as Austria, Italy, and Switzerland.

On the books, Spain still requires the renunciation of previous citizenship(s) except for nationals of countries with which Spain has a dual nationality agreement (countries from the Ibero-American Community of Nations, Andorra, the Philippines and Equatorial Guinea). This requirement is largely symbolic.

Language and civil knowledge are both assessed in an interview and approved at the discretion of the authority. Immigrants in Spain must have a clear criminal record in the country of origin and residence and show good 'civic conduct', which is assessed through a discretionary procedure. Judges of the civil registry conduct informal interviews with citizenship applicants in order to assess whether he or she has sufficient means of subsistence.

<sup>19</sup> Ordinary naturalisation refers to 'any mode of acquisition after birth of a nationality not previously held by the target person that requires an application by this person or his or her legal agent as well as an act of granting nationality by a public authority' (EUDO citizenship glossary).

## Provisions for ordinary naturalisation in Spain, EU-15 and EU-27



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

### Results from the National Roundtable

**The most controversial legal issues arising from the national roundtable were the disproportionately long residence requirements and discretionary integration interviews.**

Firstly, as the CITLAW indicators show, the Spanish legislation is quite restrictive given the long residence requirements. The difference between the 10 and 2 years to access citizenship is quite debated. Several attempts to reduce the 10 year requirement to five years failed in the Parliament and, according to the roundtable participants, there is currently little likelihood of changing this requirement.

*I think we all agree on the issue of time periods. (...) before having the documentation, it can take up to 3, 4, 5, 6 years to get a residence permit. Then this residence permit must go on for 10 years and then you begin the process of naturalisation, well, the problem is that the procedure also goes on and on and finally we find that the whole process is traumatic.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona, 14 December 2012, NGO)

Secondly, discretionary integration interviews are perceived as a concern. The assessment of civic knowledge and language skills are based on a personal interview. This can lead to unequal application of guidelines and to question to what extent a subjective assessment of an interview can appropriately judge a person's level of integration.

*I'm sorry for the short anecdote, I'm getting to the point, because it is very funny, or it is to me...yesterday an immigration law attorney was telling me that one of her clients, in the process of obtaining her passport, was asked the following question: What is a flamenco? A language? A bird? Or a type of music? And that was the question for obtaining her passport!*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, civil servant)

*The integration and linguistic prerequisites are rather random for each case. There are many stories (...). Mine is of a historian, of Moroccan descent, who was asked to explain who the Catholic kings were, and he told them "wait, sit down and I'll make you an essay". (...) Therefore, it becomes evident that it is very discretionary, and that's what's important. The criteria that we impose, I reckon, should be much more objective.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, politician)

One of the most recurrent criticisms in the access to citizenship debate in Spain is the fact that contradictions arise between the immigration law and nationality law. Immigration and access to nationality have traditionally not been linked in discourse, but more importantly, also not in the legal framework. Access to nationality is regulated by the Civil Code<sup>20</sup> and immigration policy is regulated in Immigration Law.<sup>21</sup> Naturalisation is not understood as part of the process of integration into Spanish society, therefore there are no initiatives to promote it. Laws concerning immigration and naturalisation operate in isolation from each other. However, as pointed out in the National Roundtables, immigration legislation is extraordinarily relevant to the extent that legal residence is the condition for accessing the application of the Civil Code.

---

20 See footnote 3.

21 Organic Law 4/2000, of 11 January, on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and their Integration into Society, modified by the Organic Laws 8/2000, 14/2003 and 2/2009.

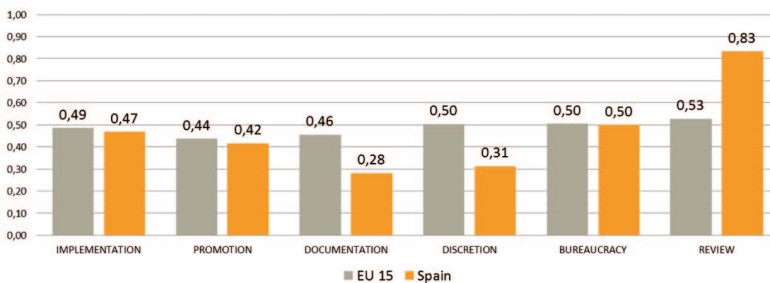
### 3. CITIZENSHIP IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS: WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURAL OBSTACLES TO ORDINARY NATURALISATION?

Opportunities created by the law may be undermined by problems in the procedure. Creating indicators is one way to measure the major opportunities and obstacles in the procedure. Citizenship Implementation Indicators measure on a 0 to 1 scale the formal aspects of the ordinary naturalisation procedure: promotion activities, documentation requirements, administrative discretion, bureaucratic procedures, and review and appeal options. 38 indicators compare all implementation stages, from efforts by public authorities to inform applicants to the options to appeal a negative decision. A score of 1 means that the country facilitates naturalisation and involves few practical obstacles. A score of 0 reflects a procedure with little facilitation and many practical obstacles.<sup>22</sup>

**In the majority of countries there is a link between the policies and the way that they are implemented.** In general, countries that have more legal obstacles also tend to have more practical obstacles in the procedure and vice-versa.

**Overall, Spain has slightly more practical obstacles in the naturalisation procedure compared to most EU-15 countries, with the exception of formal access to judicial review of negative decisions.**<sup>23</sup> Spain is less inclusive in terms of the documentation that it requires for naturalisation than most EU-15 countries. Discretion is a major practical obstacle since ordinary naturalisation is primarily not an entitlement in Spain. Authorities can make use of discretion to exempt candidates from certain conditions which can lead to unequal treatment. As mentioned before, the assessment of language and civic knowledge is a discretionary process in Spain.

#### Overall results of Citizenship Implementation Indicators in Spain and EU-15



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

<sup>22</sup> For more information see appendix and visit <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.

<sup>23</sup> For more detailed information on citizenship procedures in Spain see EUDO country profile for Spain available at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/country-profiles/?country=Spain>.

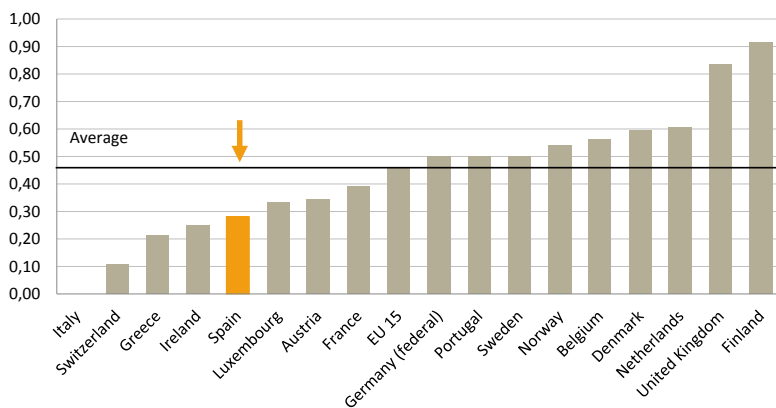
## Promotion

The promotion to access citizenship is limited, but still around the EU-15 average. Spain provides little support to meet language requirements; there is no state-run or funded service; there are no campaigns to promote citizenship and inform potential candidates. In contrast, the free naturalisation procedure is one example of a promotional policy in Spain.

## Documentation

**It is more difficult to provide required documentation in Spain than in most EU-15 countries.** Indeed, only Ireland, Greece and Italy are more restrictive in terms of the documentation required. In Spain applicants must provide translated and certified versions of the birth certificate, the passport and the criminal record from the country of origin. This can result in a major bureaucratic hurdle and high costs for immigrants. In addition, the candidate has to provide extensive documentation on economic resources, for example job contracts, payslips, or social assistance claims. There are no exemptions from this requirement based on humanitarian (refugees, stateless persons) or vulnerability grounds (e.g. age, illiteracy, mental/physical disability).

### Documentation in EU-15

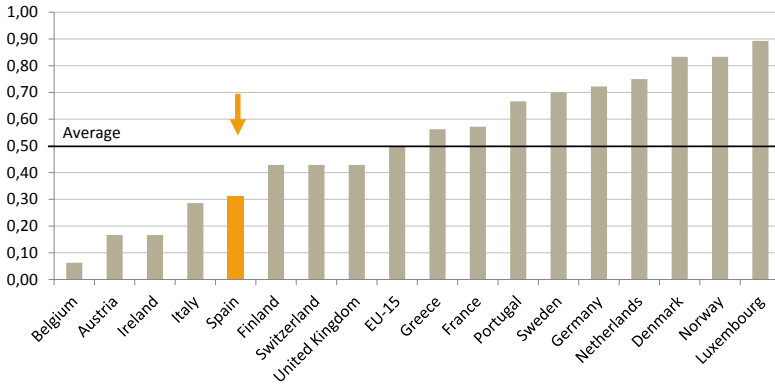


Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

**The Spanish naturalisation procedure is among the most discretionary among EU-15 countries.** This is mainly due to discretionary grounds for the assessment of language and civic knowledge through interviews. There are no clear conditions and guidelines for this requirement.



## Discretion in EU-15, Norway and Switzerland



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

### Review

**Spain has one of the highest scores on the strength of judicial review of the procedure, considerably above the EU-15 average.** Immigrants have the right to appeal to the highest national court in case their naturalisation claim has been refused. The authority has to give clear reasons on what grounds the decision has been taken. The discretionary integration assessment can also be appealed which can lead to a revision of negative decisions.

### Results from the National Roundtable

Although it has been recognised that the assessment of the level of integration is best done at the local level, several participants raised the issue of a lack of transparency regarding integration requirements. Some participants also voiced a need for better training of officials to conduct integration interviews. The particular situation of Spain as a federal state with strong regional identities (for example, in Catalonia and the Basque Country) poses an additional challenge to create unified conditions on what it means to be 'sufficiently integrated' (civil registry) in Spain.

*We should try that these procedures are also the least traumatic possible and make the indicators of evaluation accessible to everyone. So that a person who goes to do the test, the interview to become a citizen from here, that this person knows what he/she is going to face.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

Significant delays in the procedure lead to questions about the administrative capacity of authorities and political priority of the issue for the government. The waiting times can amount to several years due to bureaucratic procedures (coordination between different agencies), large backlogs of applications, understaffing of offices and an absence of legal time limits.<sup>24</sup>

*For example, I went this year to Madrid and I was told at the registry that in December 2012 they had to finish and solve all the ones from 2010, the paperwork for the nationality of 2010. And in 2013 they will begin with the ones from 2011, so this will take long until the paperwork is up to date.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

Lack of information and promotion is a practical obstacle for many. The number of applications may simply remain low because immigrants are not aware of the opportunities and benefits.

*That people have to make an appointment here in Barcelona with three years of waiting and in another village three weeks. Why is there such a difference, right? Here three years and somewhere else a man who has just arrived files, because you have the right to file because he is in that village.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

*It's not that they don't want their children to have citizenship; it's that they do not know (about the procedure). And sometimes the information is contradictory. And this makes many people stay put. (...) It is the lack of information and that they're (the government) not interested in these people having this nationality.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

---

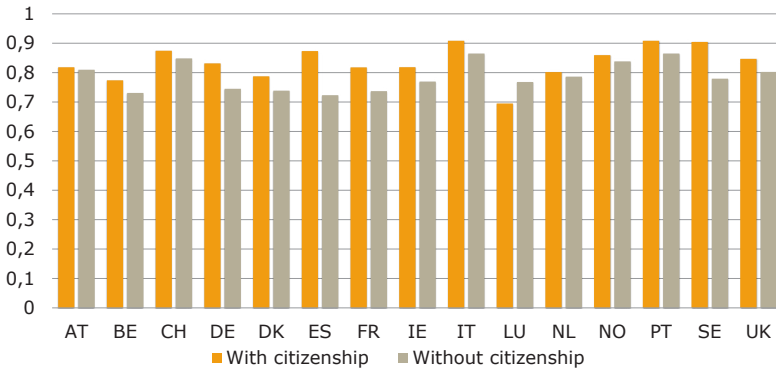
24 The Ministry of Justice acknowledging the delay in the procedures is implementing a new "Citizenship Plan" (titled in Spanish as "Plan Intensivo de Nacionalidad") to catch up with the applications. For further information: <http://www.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/es/1288777650107/EstructuraOrganica.html>

## 4. CITIZENSHIP INTEGRATION INDICATORS: DOES CITIZENSHIP MATTER FOR INTEGRATION?

Are naturalised immigrants better off than immigrants that have not acquired citizenship? Citizenship Integration Indicators compare labour market participation and socio-economic status of native citizens, naturalised citizens and non-citizens based on the 2008 Labour Force Survey and EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions. Ten core indicators measure levels of integration in the EU-27 countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland with regards to the citizenship status of migrants. Indicators are organised into three categories: labour force participation, social exclusion, and living conditions.<sup>25</sup>

**In most countries, immigrants who have naturalised are often better off than immigrants who have not naturalised**, even after taking into account the differences in age at arrival in the country, residence, education, the region of origin, the region of the destination country and the reason for migration.

### Employment of foreign born immigrants after statistical controls in EU-15



On average, the difference between naturalised and non-naturalised is particularly high for immigrants from non-EU countries. Naturalised migrants are more often employed, less often overqualified for their jobs, have better housing conditions and have less difficulty paying household expenses.<sup>26</sup>

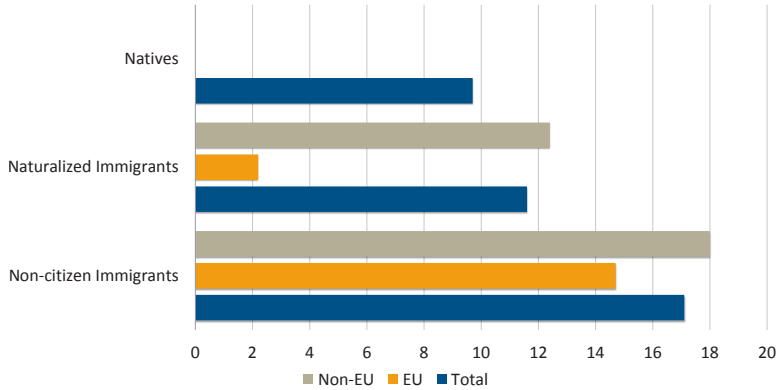
Differences among naturalised and non-naturalised citizens can also be perceived in the 2008 unemployment rates in Spain. Although unemployment rates of naturalised

<sup>25</sup> The handbook features a selection of Citizenship Integration Indicators. For more information see appendix and <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.

<sup>26</sup> For more information see OECD (2011) 'A passport for the better integration of immigrants' and Citizenship Integration Indicators at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.

immigrants are still higher than natives', unemployment rates for naturalised immigrants are roughly 6% lower compared to immigrants who have not become citizens. The benefit of naturalisation seems to be particularly high for EU citizens, with a difference of 12 points (2.2% of unemployment for naturalised EU-born immigrants compared to 14.7% of unemployment for non-naturalised EU citizens).

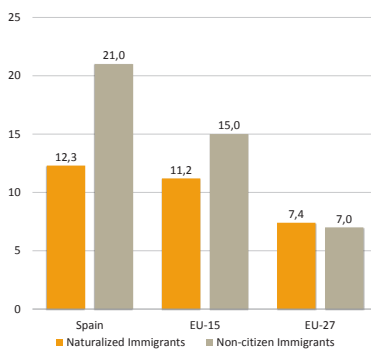
### Unemployment Rates in Spain 2008 (%)



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

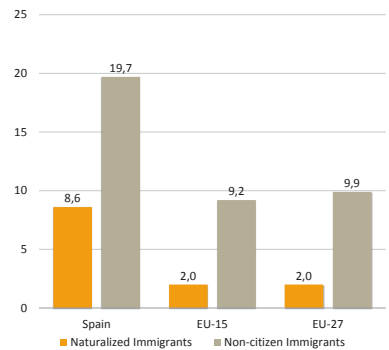
Immigrants that have become citizens in Spain have better living conditions than the ones that have not. Immigrants that are not citizens of Spain are almost twice as likely as naturalised immigrants to have difficulties of making ends meet.<sup>27</sup> Naturalised immigrants also spend less of their income on housing compared to non-naturalised immigrants. As a conclusion, the difference between naturalised and non-naturalised immigrants is larger in Spain than in most EU-15 countries.

### Share having difficulty making ends meet in Spain 2008, EU-15 and EU-27 (%)



Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

### Housing Cost Burden, Gaps with Natives in Spain 2008, EU-15 and EU-27 (%)



<sup>27</sup> This indicator measures the level of difficulty the respondents' household has in paying its usual expenses. Values correspond to the percentage of respondents that indicate they have some difficulty, difficulty, or great difficulty paying usual household expenses.

In Spain, like in most of Europe, better outcomes for naturalised immigrants seem to be a sign that ‘better integrated’ immigrants are more likely to acquire citizenship irrespective of how inclusive or restrictive a country’s citizenship policy is. While immigrants from less developed countries are more likely to apply, among them, the ‘better integrated’ do. Thus, the most integrated immigrants become citizens regardless of how demanding the naturalisation requirements are.

But does the acquisition of citizenship itself actually improve integration outcomes? Does the policy select the best ‘integrated’ immigrants or do only the best ‘integrated’ immigrants apply regardless of the policy? Do naturalised immigrants usually have better living conditions because they have acquired citizenship or is it more common for people with better living conditions to apply for citizenship?

**More national and international research is needed to clarify the effects of citizenship and better address why naturalised immigrants often have better integration outcomes.** Researchers need panel data to answer this question about causality. Several studies that have used panel data analysis have found a positive effect of citizenship on labour market participation in Germany, France and the United States.<sup>28</sup> This project found also that, although political participation increases mainly with length of residence, citizenship status makes it more likely that first generation immigrants will also engage in less conventional forms of participation, such as wearing a campaign sticker, signing a petition, taking part in a demonstration or boycotting certain products.

### Results from the National Roundtable

Most participants suggested in the National Roundtables there is no perceived causality relation between naturalisation and integration, although there were some differences among the stakeholders.

Policy actors without an immigrant background themselves tended to understand that naturalisation as a process of the acquisition of practical rights, such as a secure status, the right to travel and return at any time, the right to more easily reunite with your family, and the right to work in some public sector jobs.

*If we now look at the statistics of the people who have left (the country): Out of this million people, many are Spanish. Simply being Spanish doesn't mean that they'll have more work, and instead they have more personal bonds with Guayaquil or something like that. Therefore, nationality is more a way of non-discrimination rather than integration. That political right doesn't matter. What matters is the existential right to be able to live quietly. And that tranquillity can be bought through the nationality.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, citizenship lawyer)

---

<sup>28</sup> For more detail, see the OECD publication ‘A passport for the better integration of immigrants?’ (2011).

Political integration of immigrants was seen as having long-term effects on society's ability for integration.

*It is true that there are probably not many people who wish to have the nationality in order to vote. It's possible. But the change, and the existence of this electoral market, would be extreme on society. Not least in a place like Catalonia, where 40% of immigrants have one of these origins that need ten years or more. (...) It's true that when the opportunity to vote in local elections has been there for certain Latin American nationals, the turnout has been very low, and thus it is not a right the majority of immigrants demand. But I believe that it would have a great impact on the political discourse, because it would represent a new electoral market and that would affect citizens' perception of the immigrant factor in a very substantive way.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, politician)

Although the naturalisation has as a direct consequence the acquisition of practical rights, this is not the only reason pointed out by the migrant representative actors. This pragmatic view is complemented with an equally important subjective side: a sense of belonging, emotional ties and recognition. All of them play a crucial role when applying for the citizenship too. ICS (p. 81) shows us that more than 70% of immigrants settled in Spain feel that citizenship help them to feel settled, among others.

*Latin Americans have the opportunity to do so (naturalise) after two years which turn into 5-6 years - not two years, 5-6 years, during which he/she has been working and has been contributing to a community. The fact is that we want access to citizenship simply to really feel like citizens, by being able to participate in a social democratic, economic process because we have provided the economic part but we do not have the social one.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

Despite the positive effects on sense of belonging, participants reminded that citizenship may decrease – but not eliminate – the discrimination and exclusion of immigrants.

*Despite being naturalised, despite being nationals, a person is being considered a foreigner or unreliable. The immigrant label is not lost when you get naturalisation and that I find particularly worrisome because it means that we are not actually building an element of diverse and plural citizenship.*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Barcelona,  
14 December 2012, NGO)

## KEY RESULTS:

1. Spain's ten year residence requirement for ordinary naturalisation is more restrictive than in most EU countries. The difference among the two and ten year procedure is seen as a discriminatory requirement.
2. Spain has one of the lowest acquisition rates of the EU-15; only 16% of immigrants have become citizens. Much more assistance and promotion must be provided for the public administration.
3. Documentation required, understaffing and bureaucratic procedures lead to a significant backlog of naturalisation that can cause delays for several years for new applicants.
4. The assessment of the integration requirement in Spain through an interview may represent a practical obstacle to naturalisation because the grounds for passing the requirement are not unified and transparent.
5. Several national roundtable participants called for formal tolerance of dual nationality. Currently, renunciation of previous citizenship is required, however, not enforced.

# METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

## CITIZENSHIP ACQUISITION INDICATORS

---

Citizenship Acquisition Indicators have been developed by Maarten Vink (Maastricht University/ European University Institute) and Tijana Prokic-Breuer (Maastricht University). Acquisition indicators have been calculated for 25 European states. The data source for the indicators is the Labour Force Survey Ad Hoc Module 2008 on the labour market situation of migrants and their descendants (Eurostat). The target population includes all persons aged between 15 and 74 (or 16 to 74 in countries where the target group for the core Labour Force Survey is from 16 years old). All numbers presented are based on at least 100 respondents.

Data is presented for the following European countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. In Germany, information on country of birth is missing for all respondents. To determine the region of origin (EU or non-EU), the study uses the country of birth of the father and/or mother of the respondent. There was no data provided by Eurostat for Finland. Data was excluded for Bulgaria, Malta and Romania due to small sample sizes.

Acquisition indicators analyse several factors, including

- **sex** (the percentage of foreign-born females and males who have acquired citizenship of the respective country of residence),
- **origin** (the percentage of foreign-born persons from EU and non-EU countries who have acquired citizenship of the respective country of residence)
- **the age at migration** (the percentage of foreign-born persons who have acquired citizenship of their country of residence, differentiated by the age at which the respondent took up residence; age groups: 0-17 years; 18-39 years; 40+ years)
- **years of residence by cohort** (the percentage of foreign-born persons who have acquired citizenship of their country of residence, differentiated by the number of years of residence: 1-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-19 years; 20 + years)
- **years of residence by minimum number of years** ( the percentage of foreign-born persons who have acquired citizenship of their country of residence, differentiated by the number of years the respondent has minimally resided there: at least 5 years; at least 10 years; at least 15 years; at least 20 years)
- **the time until naturalisation** (the numbers of years it takes on average for foreign-born persons to acquire the citizenship of the respective country of residence)

For more information visit:

<http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators/citacqindicators>



## CITIZENSHIP LAW INDICATORS

---

Citizenship Law Indicators have been developed by Rainer Bauböck (European University Institute), Iseult Honohan and Kristen Jeffers (University College Dublin) in consultation with Maarten Vink (University of Maastricht) and Thomas Huddleston (Migration Policy Group).

Basic indicator scores have been calculated on the basis of a list of substantive and procedural requirements for each mode of acquisition or loss of citizenship using both additive and weighting formulas. The scoring is based on EUDO CITIZENSHIP's qualitative databases on [modes of acquisition](#) and [loss](#) of citizenship, on the detailed country reports and additional information from standardised questionnaire answers by legal experts in the respective countries.

Citizenship indicators are aggregated at different levels in order to analyse more general features of citizenship laws. The six highest level indicators that are calculated using all 45 basic indicators are: *ius sanguinis*, *ius soli*, residence-based ordinary naturalisation, naturalisation on specific grounds, voluntary renunciation and withdrawal/lapse.

These indicators have been calculated for 36 European states. The following labels are used for average indicators: EUROPE for all 36 states, EU 27 for all 2012 member states of the EU, EU 15 for the pre-2004 EU member states and EU 12 for the post-2004 accession states. Citizenship Law Indicators are based on citizenship laws at the end of 2011. In the future, it is foreseen to offer a new edition for past years that allow analysing trends over time.

For more information visit:

<http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators/eudo-citizenship-law-indicators> where you will also find a comprehensive [methodology report](#).

## CITIZENSHIP IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS

---

Citizenship Implementation Indicators have been developed by Thomas Huddleston (Migration Policy Group).

Citizenship Implementation Indicators have been calculated for 35 European states, as well as for three German federal provinces. The following list presents the five dimensions and the number of corresponding indicators and sub-indicators:

- Promotion: how much do authorities encourage eligible applicants to apply?
- Documentation: how easy is it for applicants to prove that they meet the legal conditions?
- Discretion: how much room do authorities have to interpret the legal conditions?
- Bureaucracy: how easy is it for authorities to come to a decision?
- Review: how strong is judicial oversight of the procedure?

A country's overall score is calculated as the simple average of these five dimensions. Based on a 0 to 1 scale, countries with scores closer to 1 create fewer obstacles in the implementation of naturalisation law. For each of the five dimensions, procedures that score closer to 1 involve greater promotion, easier documentation, less discretion, less bureaucracy, and/or stronger review. Countries with scores closer to 0 create more obstacles in the implementation of the naturalisation law. For each of the five dimensions, procedures that score closer to 0 involve little promotion, difficult documentation, wide discretion, greater bureaucracy, and/or weak review. The scores are the result of country reports written for the purpose of this project and a standardised questionnaire filled in by legal experts.

For more information visit:

<http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators/citimpindicators>

## CITIZENSHIP INTEGRATION INDICATORS

---

Citizenship Integration Indicators have been developed by Derek Hutcheson and Kristen Jeffers (University College Dublin).

The indicators are derived from the 2008 EU Labour Force Survey Ad Hoc Module on 'The Labour Market Situation of Migrants and Their Descendants' (Eurostat). Socio-Economic Status indicators are derived from the 2008 cross-sectional EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC).

Some data may be omitted due to small sample sizes. All numbers presented are based on at least 100 respondents or 20 for the Socio-Economic Status indicators.

Citizenship indicators include:

### LABOUR FORCE INDICATORS

**Unemployment:** the number of people aged 15 to 74 unemployed, as defined by the International Labour Organisation, as a percentage of the labour force (the total number of people employed plus unemployed) of the same age group.

**Economic Activity Rate:** the total number of people aged 15 to 74 employed plus the total number of people unemployed (the labour force) as a percentage of the total population of the same age group.

**Level of Education:** the mean highest education attainment level among respondents aged 25 to 74. Values correspond to mean education levels specified by the International Standard Classification on Education: (1) primary education; (2) lower secondary education; (3) higher secondary education; (4) post-secondary non-tertiary education; (5) university degree; (6) postgraduate studies.

**Overqualification rate:** calculated as a share of the population aged 25 to 74 with a high educational level (ISCED 5 or 6), and having low or medium skilled jobs (ISCO

occupation levels 4 to 9) among employed persons having attained a high educational level of the same age group.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS INDICATORS

**Social Benefit dependence:** measures receipt of family/children related allowance, housing allowances, and social benefits not elsewhere classified as the mean share of respondents' gross annual income.

**Poor dwelling (quality):** aims to objectively measure the quality of the respondents' accommodation. Values correspond to the percentage of respondents who indicate that the dwelling in which they live has a problem with a leaking roof and/or damp ceilings, dampness in the walls, floors or foundation and/or rot in window frames and doors.

**Poor dwelling (environment):** aims to objectively measure the quality of the area in which the respondent resides. Values correspond to the percentage of respondents who indicate that pollution, grime, or other environmental problems in the area caused by traffic or industry is a problem for the household.

**Poor dwelling (crime):** aims to objectively measure the quality of the area in which the respondent resides. Values correspond to the percentage of respondents who indicate that crime, violence, or vandalism in the area is a problem for the household.

**Difficulty making ends meet:** measures the level of difficulty the respondents' household has in paying its usual expenses. Values correspond to the percentage of respondents that indicate they have some difficulty, difficulty, or great difficulty paying usual household expenses.

**Housing cost burden:** measures the average percentage of monthly disposable household income spent on monthly housing costs.

**Unmet health need:** measures the percentage of respondents who indicated that there had been at least one occasion during the last twelve months when the respondent needed medical or dental examination or treatment and did not receive treatment.

For more information visit:

<http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators/integration-indicators>

## NATIONAL ROUNDTABLES

---

National Roundtables were organised by national partners and the Migration Policy Group in Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The purpose of the roundtables was to present the project's country results to national stakeholders in order to gather their feedback and interpret the findings in a national policy context. Participants were asked about the factors that influence naturalisation, the impact of citizenship on various forms of

integration, the impact of national policies and the political environment for reform. The ten events took place between November 2012 and February 2013.

10-20 national stakeholders were invited to each event. Stakeholders included civil servants working in national, regional or local administration, regional or national-level politicians, members of non-governmental organisations including immigrant organisation, advocacy groups and service providers, citizenship and immigration lawyers, and academic researchers working for research institutes and universities. The full list of participants in each country is not made public because participants were insured anonymity to facilitate open debate.

The ten national roundtables were organised in two structured focus group sessions of each 60-90 minutes. The discussion was recorded and transcribed by national partners and analysed by the Migration Policy Group. All transcripts were used for content analysis using Nvivo software package for coding.

For more information, see the comparative EU level report:  
<http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>







## About the MIGRATION POLICY GROUP

The Migration Policy Group is an independent non-profit European organisation dedicated to strategic thinking and acting on mobility, equality, and diversity. MPG's mission is to contribute to lasting and positive change resulting in open and inclusive societies by stimulating well-informed European debate and action on migration, equality and diversity, and enhancing European co-operation between and amongst governmental agencies, civil society organisations and the private sector.

We articulate this mission through four primary activities focused on harnessing the advantages of migration, equality and diversity and responding effectively to their challenges:

1. Gathering, analysing and sharing information
2. Creating opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning
3. Mobilising and engaging stakeholders in policy debates
4. Establishing, inspiring and managing expert networks

For more information on our past and current research, visit our website at [www.migpolgroup.com](http://www.migpolgroup.com)



## About EUDO-CITIZENSHIP

Democracy is government accountable to citizens. But how do states determine who their citizens are? EUDO CITIZENSHIP allows you to answer this and many other questions on citizenship in the EU member states and neighbouring countries.

EUDO CITIZENSHIP is an observatory within the [European Union Observatory on Democracy \(EUDO\)](#) web platform hosted at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the European University Institute in Florence.

The observatory conducts research and provides exhaustive and updated information on loss and acquisition of citizenship, national and international legal norms, citizenship statistics, bibliographical resources, comparative analyses and debates about research strategies and policy reforms.

For more information on our past and current research, visit our website at [www.eudo-citizenship.eu](http://www.eudo-citizenship.eu)

