Acquisition of citizenship in the EU

EU Member States granted citizenship to almost 1 million persons in 2016
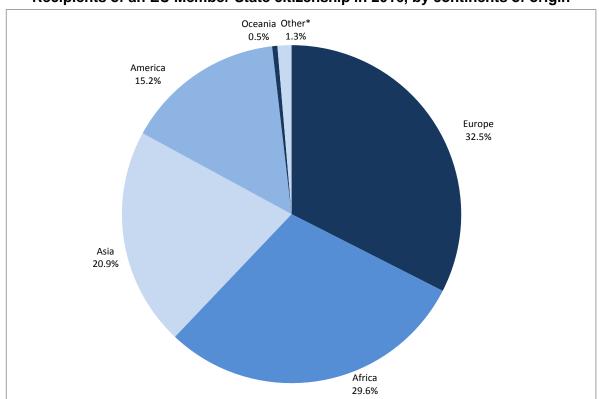
Moroccans, Albanians and Indians were the main recipients

In 2016, around 995 000 persons acquired citizenship of a Member State of the **European Union** (EU), up from 841 000 in 2015 and 889 000 in 2014. Of the total number of persons obtaining the citizenship of one of the EU Member States in 2016, 12% were former citizens of another EU Member State, while the majority were non-EU citizens or stateless.

The largest group acquiring citizenship of an EU Member State where they lived in 2016 was citizens of **Morocco** (101 300 persons, of whom 89% acquired citizenship of Spain, Italy or France), ahead of citizens of **Albania** (67 500, 97% acquired citizenship of Italy or Greece), **India** (41 700, almost 60% acquired British citizenship), **Pakistan** (32 900, more than half acquired British citizenship), **Turkey** (32 800, almost half acquired German citizenship), **Romania** (29 700, 44% acquired Italian citizenship), and **Ukraine** (24 000, 60% acquired citizenship of Germany, Romania, Portugal or Italy). Moroccans, Albanians, Indians, Pakistanis, Turks, Romanians, and Ukrainians represented together about a third (33%) of the total number of persons who acquired citizenship of an EU Member State in 2016. **Romanians** (29 700 persons) and **Poles** (19 800) were the two largest groups of EU citizens acquiring citizenship of another EU Member State.

These data come from an <u>article</u> issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

Recipients of an EU Member State citizenship in 2016, by continents of origin

* Other includes stateless and recipients with unknown citizenship.

Main recipients of an EU Member State citizenship in 2016

Main recipients of an EU citizenship	Total (in 1000)	Main EU Member State granting citizenships	%	Second main EU Member State granting citizenships	%	Third main EU Member State granting citizenships	%
Moroccans	101.3	Spain	36.5	Italy	34.8	France	17.5
Albanians	67.5	Italy	54.7	Greece	42.3	Belgium	0.8
Indians	41.7	United Kingdom	59.1	Italy	22.9	Germany	3.7
Pakistanis	32.9	United Kingdom	50.8	Italy	23.3	Spain	9.6
Turks	32.8	Germany	49.6	France	17.5	Netherlands	8.5
Romanians	29.7	Italy	43.6	Germany	12.9	Hungary	9.7
Ukrainians	24.1	Germany	19.2	Romania	16.8	Portugal	13.5
Algerians	23.4	France	75.4	Spain	9.5	Italy	7.2
Russians	22.4	Germany	21.6	France	18.3	Finland	9.1
Brazilians	21.5	Portugal	36.3	Italy	27.0	Spain	15.9
Ecuadorians	21.0	Spain	72.5	Italy	21.9	Belgium	2.3
Poles	19.8	Germany	33.7	United Kingdom	22.4	Sweden	13.7
Nigerians	18.8	United Kingdom	52.1	Italy	16.9	Spain	11.6
Somalis	18.3	Sweden	49.7	Netherlands	21.5	United Kingdom	14.5
Colombians	17.6	Spain	81.1	Italy	7.3	France	4.4
Bolivians	16.8	Spain	94.1	Italy	2.0	Croatia	0.9
Bangladeshis	15.4	Italy	54.9	United Kingdom	30.2	Spain	3.5
Iraqis	15.0	Sweden	24.8	Germany	23.7	Denmark	19.5
Tunisians	14.7	France	52.2	Italy	33.2	Germany	7.7
Peruvians	14.1	Spain	49.3	Italy	41.1	France	2.7
Filipinos	11.4	United Kingdom	37.4	Italy	24.1	Spain	8.7
Chinese	11.4	United Kingdom	26.3	France	18.1	Italy	16.4
Senegalese	11.3	Italy	44.9	France	29.7	Spain	20.2
Dominicans	11.3	Spain	81.3	Italy	12.7	Germany	2.3
Afghans	11.1	Germany	22.3	Sweden	20.9	United Kingdom	17.7
Ghanaians	10.9	Italy	40.7	United Kingdom	32.8	Germany	6.4
Serbians	10.8	Germany	24.0	Italy	21.1	France	15.0
Kosovars*	9.5	Germany	41.6	Italy	37.7	Sweden	7.5
Iranians	9.5	Germany	28.1	United Kingdom	22.2	Sweden	15.1
Syrians	9.3	Sweden	48.3	Germany	24.3	France	7.0

* Kosovo designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
The source dataset can be found here.

Main recipients of citizenships granted by EU Member States, 2016

	Total number	2016/ 2015	Main recipients		Second main recipients		Third main recipients	
			Citizens of	%	Citizens of	%	Citizens of	%
EU	**994 800**	**+18%**	**Morocco**	**10.2**	**Albania**	**6.8**	**India**	**4.2**
Belgium	31 935	+18%	Morocco	12.5	Romania	4.8	Netherlands	4.4
Bulgaria	1 626	+28%	Russia	30.0	Ukraine	17.1	Turkey	8.9
Czech Republic	4 561	+74%	Ukraine	38.4	Russia	15.1	Slovakia	12.6
Denmark	15 028	+28%	Iraq	19.4	Afghanistan	10.8	Somalia	6.6
Germany	112 843	+2%	Turkey	14.4	Poland	5.9	Russia	4.3
Estonia	1 780	+98%	Recognised non-citizen*	81.9	Russia	13.7	Ukraine	1.6
Ireland	10 038	-26%	Poland	13.2	India	10.2	Nigeria	7.7
Greece	33 210	+138%	Albania	86.0	Ukraine	1.5	Russia	1.2
Spain	150 944	+32%	Morocco	24.5	Bolivia	10.5	Ecuador	10.1
France	119 152	+5%	Morocco	14.9	Algeria	14.8	Tunisia	6.4
Croatia	3 973	+232%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	38.2	Serbia	18.5	Chile	4.4
Italy	201 591	+13%	Albania	18.3	Morocco	17.5	Romania	6.4
Cyprus	4 660	+40%	Russia	24.8	Greece	15.6	United Kingdom	7.2
Latvia	1 957	+3%	Recognised non-citizen*	69.5	United Kingdom	6.6	Russia	6.5
Lithuania	176	-4%	Russia	32.4	Stateless**	21.0	Ukraine	16.5
Luxembourg	3 315	+4%	Portugal	32.7	France	11.6	Belgium	9.0
Hungary	4 315	+7%	Romania	66.6	Ukraine	8.5	Slovakia	6.5
Malta	1 495	+131%	Russia	33.0	United Kingdom	8.4	Saudi Arabia	5.2
Netherlands	28 543	+2%	Somalia	13.8	Morocco	11.8	Turkey	9.8
Austria	8 530	+5%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	14.8	Turkey	9.6	Serbia	8.8
Poland	3 684	-7%	Ukraine	51.2	Belarus	15.3	Russia	6.4
Portugal	25 104	+23%	Brazil	31.3	Cape Verde	14.4	Ukraine	12.9
Romania	4 527	+73%	Ukraine	89.1	Turkey	3.1	Syria	1.5
Slovenia	1 297	+3%	Bosnia & Herzegovina	55.8	Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia	12.8	Serbia	12.3
Slovakia	484	+57%	Czech Republic	21.7	Serbia	19.4	Ukraine	15.9
Finland	9 375	+18%	Russia	21.6	Somalia	11.4	Iraq	5.7
Sweden	61 294	+25%	Somalia	14.8	Syria	7.3	Stateless**	7.2
United Kingdom	149 372	+27%	India	16.1	Pakistan	11.2	Nigeria	6.6
Iceland	703	-12%	Poland	31.9	Philippines	7.8	Thailand	6.8
Liechtenstein	167	+52%	Turkey	29.9	Austria	19.2	Switzerland	13.2
Norway	13 712	10%	Eritrea	13.7	Somalia	8.8	Afghanistan	7.3
Switzerland	42 937	+6%	Italy	12.1	Germany	11.0	Portugal	9.4

* A recognised non-citizen is a person who is neither a citizen of the reporting country nor of any other country, and who has established links to the reporting country which include some but not all rights and obligations of full citizenship. A majority of these persons were citizens of the former Soviet Union.

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

The source dataset can be found here.

The number of UK nationals acquiring citizenship of another EU Member State more than doubled in 2016

All but three Member States granted citizenship to more people in 2016 than they did in 2015. The largest relative increase was in **Croatia** (in 2016, it granted citizenship to 3 times more people than in 2015 – an increase from 1 196 persons to 3 973, or +232%), in **Greece** (the number more than doubled from 13 933 to 33 210, or +138%) and **Malta** (from 646 to 1 495, or +131%).

The number of citizenships granted fell in three Member States in 2016, with the largest decrease in **Ireland** (from 13 565 to 10 038 or -26%).

Focusing on former citizenships for which at least 100 people acquired the citizenship of an EU Member State in 2016, the largest relative increase compared with 2015 was for the citizens of the United Kingdom (the number more than doubled from 2 478 people in 2015 to 6 555 people in 2016, or +165%), nationals of Saudi Arabia (from 133 to 277, or +108%), Nicaragua (from 715 to 1 423, or +99%), Bhutan (from 72 to 143, or +99%), and Paraguay (from 2 046 to 3468, or +70%).

Highest naturalisation rate in Croatia and Sweden

The naturalisation rate is the ratio of the number of persons who acquired the citizenship of a country during a year over the stock of foreign residents in the same country at the beginning of the year. In 2016, the highest naturalisation rates were registered in **Croatia** (9.7 citizenships granted per 100 resident foreigners), **Sweden** (7.9) and **Portugal** (6.5), followed by **Romania** and **Greece** (both 4.2), **Finland** and **Italy** (both 4.1). At the opposite end of the scale, naturalisation rates below 1 citizenship acquisition per 100 resident foreigners were recorded in **Austria**, **Latvia** and **Slovakia** (all 0.7), **Estonia** and **Lithuania** (0.9) and the **Czech Republic** (1.0).

Naturalisation rates in the EU Member States, 2016
(citizenships acquired per 100 resident foreigners)

The source dataset can be found here.

Geographical information

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

Methods and definitions

The acquisitions of citizenship data are provided 12 months after the reference period to Eurostat by the National Statistical Institutes of the EU Member States in accordance with Regulation 862/2007.

Citizenship is the legal bond between an individual and a state, acquired by birth, naturalisation or other means according to national legislation. **Naturalisation** is the process by which a state grants its citizenship through a formal act on the application of the individual concerned. **Other ways** of granting citizenship may include spouses of nationals, minors adopted by nationals and descendants of nationals born abroad returning to the country of origin of their ancestors. Regulation 862/2007 Art 3.1(d) asks Member States to provide data on *"persons having their usual residence in the territory of the Member State and having acquired during the reference year the citizenship of the Member State and having formerly held the citizenship of another Member State or a third country or having formerly been stateless, disaggregated by age and sex, and by the former citizenship of the persons concerned and by whether the person was formerly stateless"*.

The **naturalisation rate** is the ratio of the number of persons who acquired the citizenship of a country during a calendar year over the stock of foreign residents in the same country at the beginning of the year. The 'naturalisation rate' should be used with caution because the numerator includes all modes of acquisitions and not just naturalisations of eligible residing foreigners and the denominator includes all foreigners and not the relevant population, i.e. those foreigners who are eligible for naturalisation.
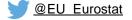
For more information

Eurostat database on migration and citizenship

Eurostat metadata on acquisition and loss of citizenship

Eurostat Statistics Explained article on acquisition of citizenship statistics

Eurostat interactive infographic on acquisition of citizenship in the EU