



# MY PATH TO A GERMAN PASSPORT

NATURALISATION AT A GLANCE



Federal Government Commissioner  
for Migration, Refugees and Integration  
Federal Government Commissioner for Anti-Racism

# TEN REQUIREMENTS FOR NATURALISATION



**You have been living continuously and legally in Germany for five years.**

Generally speaking, you should have lived in Germany with permission and without interruption for at least five years. In certain cases, it is possible to become naturalised earlier. You can find more information in our online guide.



**You can prove your identity and current citizenship.**

You will need a biometric passport or another identity document with a photograph. If you do not have any such proof, other documents can help. Please contact your nationality authority to discuss this. Stateless persons require a travel document for stateless persons.



## **You are allowed to stay in Germany permanently or long-term.**

You have a permanent right of residence if you have a settlement permit, for example, or if you are an EU citizen or a citizen of Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway or Switzerland. A temporary residence permit may also be sufficient – if it allows you to stay here long-term, for example as a skilled worker, as a recognised refugee or as a person with recognised subsidiary protection.



## **You can provide for yourself and your family financially.**

For example, you can pay for food, clothing and accommodation for yourself and your dependent family members on your own. Generally speaking, you cannot be receiving social assistance benefits or citizen's benefit.



## **You have sufficient knowledge of German.**

You don't have to speak perfect German. But for people older than 16, general language skills at level B1 are required. You can prove your level by passing a language exam (DSD I, Goethe-Zertifikat B1, or telc Deutsch B1). Find out what the different levels mean at: [www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/spr/unt/kum/mdg/ver.html](http://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/spr/unt/kum/mdg/ver.html)



## **You are familiar with the legal system and society in Germany.**

You can prove this by passing a naturalisation test, for example. During the test you have to correctly answer simple questions about Germany's legal system, culture and history.



## **You are committed to freedom and democracy.**

When you become naturalised, you must officially declare your commitment to Germany's free and democratic basic order and to the Basic Law. You also affirm that you will not do anything which might harm the Federal Republic of Germany.



## **You acknowledge Germany's special historical responsibility.**

Germany has a special historical responsibility for the tyrannical National Socialist regime and its consequences. In particular, you must declare your commitment to the protection of Jewish life, to the peaceful coexistence of peoples and to the prohibition on waging a war of aggression.



## **You have not been convicted of a criminal offence.**

If you have previously been sentenced to imprisonment, or have received a suspended sentence of more than 3 months or a fine of more than 90 daily rates, you cannot be naturalised.



## **There are no other reasons that prevent you from being naturalised.**

You cannot be naturalised if you do not respect the equal rights of men and women, or if you belong to or support a terrorist organisation or extremist religious group.

# THE NATURALISATION TEST AT A GLANCE

33

questions on Germany's culture,  
history and legal system

>90%

pass rate in recent years

€25

fee for taking the test

Want to check your knowledge? Click here to access the online  
test centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees  
(BAMF): [bamf.de](https://bamf.de)



# ONLINE GUIDE



Are you interested in naturalisation?

Visit our online guide at

**[www.einbuengerung.de](http://www.einbuengerung.de)**.



It explains the naturalisation process step by step.



You can check your naturalisation options and find key information on the requirements and necessary documents.

# FOUR GOOD REASONS FOR A GERMAN PASSPORT

German citizenship gives you more rights, new opportunities and makes certain things easier:



## Greater freedom of travel

You can travel visa-free to over 170 countries. Visa applications are easier and it's easier for relatives to visit you in Germany.



## Access to all professions

Your residence permit no longer determines your choice of job. You are free to enter any profession if you have the right qualifications. For example, you can pursue a career as a civil servant, become a judge, teach in a school or practise as a doctor.





## **Vote and run for election**

Finally have your say – as a German citizen, you're not only able to vote, you can also run for election yourself.



## **Live in Germany with full citizenship rights**

Appointments at the foreigners authority or the consulate will be a thing of the past. In addition, you can live and work anywhere in the European Union (EU), Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland (right of free movement).

# SIX QUESTIONS ABOUT APPLYING FOR NATURALISATION

## Who applies?

If you are 16 years or older, you submit the application yourself. If you are under the age of 16, your parents or legal representative must submit it on your behalf.

## Where do I apply?

At your local nationality authority. If you have questions about where you can submit your application, please call the official telephone number 115.

## How do I apply?

You can obtain the application form from your nationality authority, either online or in person. It's best to fill it out before your initial appointment. Together with the application form, you must also submit proof of your language skills and salary, as well as other supporting documents.

## **Do I have to give up my previous citizenship?**

You are allowed to keep your previous citizenship. However, the law of the country that you are a citizen of may be different – you might automatically lose this citizenship when you become naturalised in Germany.

## **How much does the application cost?**

The naturalisation application costs €255 per person. For underaged children who are to be naturalised together with their parents, the application typically costs €51. If you have difficulties paying these costs, contact the authority to discuss this.

## **How long does the naturalisation procedure take?**

Processing times vary in the different Länder (federal states) and depend on the individual case. Expect a processing time of up to 18 months or longer.

# PUBLISHING INFORMATION

## **Published by**

The Federal Government Commissioner for Migration,  
Refugees and Integration  
The Federal Government Commissioner for Anti-Racism

## **Last updated**

June 2024

## **Designed by**

Zum goldenen Hirschen Berlin GmbH, 10997 Berlin

## **Printed by**

MKL Druck GmbH & Co. KG, 48346 Ostbevern

This publication is part of the Federal Government's public relations work. It is provided free of charge and is not intended for sale.

Find further information and a naturalisation Quick Check at: [einbuengerung.de](https://einbuengerung.de)