

The House of Representatives

Special Competences: Naturalizations

General

Generally speaking, foreigners can obtain the Belgian nationality in three ways: through *assignation*, *declaration* and *naturalization*. The procedures are described in the Code of Belgian Nationality.

The **assignation** can be obtained automatically by foreigners who are born in Belgium and of whom the parent or adoptive parent has already been residing for a long period of time in Belgium.

Judicially speaking, the nationality can be **obtained (acquisition)** when the foreigner starts the procedure (*declaration* and *naturalization*).

A foreigner who has been residing in Belgium for a long period of time and who can prove that he or she is proficient in one of the national languages and has integrated into Belgian society and, if appropriate, is contributing to its economic life, can make **a declaration of nationality**. This declaration is treated by a public servant of the Register Office and/or by the Court of First Instance.

Foreigners can also obtain the Belgian nationality by **naturalization**. Only the Belgian House of Representatives is competent for the granting of naturalizations (stipulated by article 74 of the Constitution).

The conditions to be met to be able to submit a request for naturalization were radically changed by the law of 4 December 2012 amending the Belgian nationality code in order to make acquisition of Belgian nationality neutral from the immigration viewpoint. Since then, the naturalization procedure has become an exceptional arrangement.

Who can be naturalized Belgian?

The conditions to be fulfilled to be able to be a naturalized Belgian read as follows:

EITHER:

1. Must be aged at least 18 or must be emancipated before;
2. Must be resident legally in Belgium;
3. Must have demonstrated or be able to demonstrate to Belgium exceptional merit in the scientific, sporting or socio-cultural field and, for this reason, being able to make a special contribution to the international reputation of Belgium;
4. And demonstrate why it is virtually impossible for him/her to acquire Belgian nationality by making a declaration of nationality pursuant to Article 12bis of the Belgian nationality code.

OR:

1. Must be aged at least 18 or must be emancipated before;
2. Must be a stateless person in Belgium pursuant to prevailing international conventions;
3. Must have been legally resident in Belgium for at least two years.

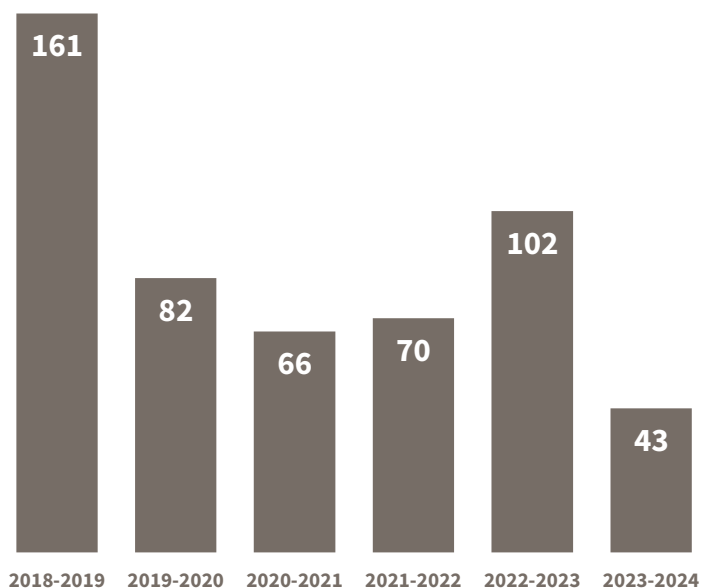
The procedure

- The application form as well as a brochure containing general information may be obtained from the local authorities (municipality administration).
- The completed application form must be sent with the requisite documents to the Register Office for the applicant's domicile or the secretary general of the House of Representatives - Citizenship Department. The form together with the attached documents are checked by the department.
- The department requests the advice of the public prosecutor for the domicile of the applicant, the Aliens Office and State Intelligence Service. It is checked whether there are any serious facts of a nature to constitute an obstacle to obtaining Belgian nationality or not. If the prosecutor has not sent his advice within four months, it is presumed to be positive and the procedure may be continued. Additional information may also be requested from other authorities.
- The complete file is then submitted to the naturalizations committee of the House of Representatives. This committee may propose a new enquiry, adjourn, approve or reject the application.
- The proposal of the committee is subject to approval by the plenary assembly of the House of Representatives.
- The naturalization certificate approved by the House must be sanctioned by the King.
- It is then published in the Moniteur belge (State Official Journal).
- The applicant becomes Belgian on the date of publication.

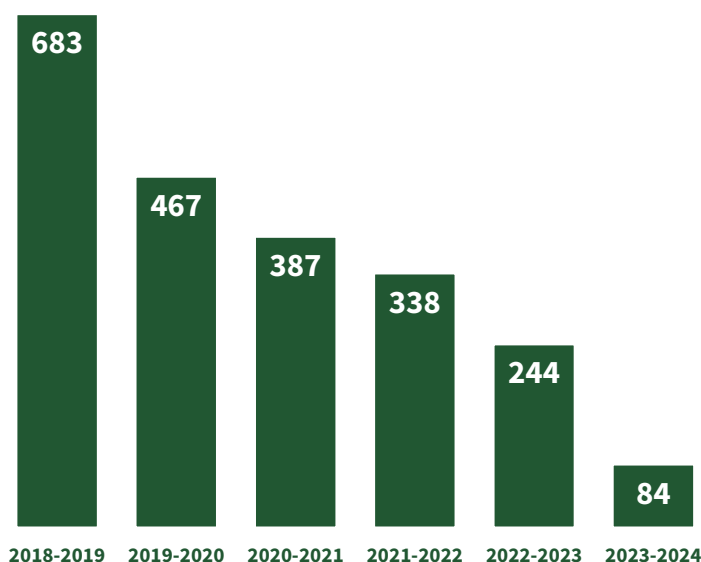
SERVICE CITOYENNETÉ

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1000 BRUXELLES

Number of applications



Number of naturalizations*



* These figures also refer to files introduced a few years ago.