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# ACCESS TO CITIZENSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

## HANDBOOK FOR FRANCE

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## HANDBOOK FOR FRANCE

Prepared by the Migration Policy Group in cooperation with France Terre d'Asile

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

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), Matthieu Tardis (France Terre d'Asile) and the EUDO country expert for France, Abdellali Hajjat.*

## 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 and its 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. All the results are accessible through an **interactive online tool and comparative reports** at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.<sup>1</sup>

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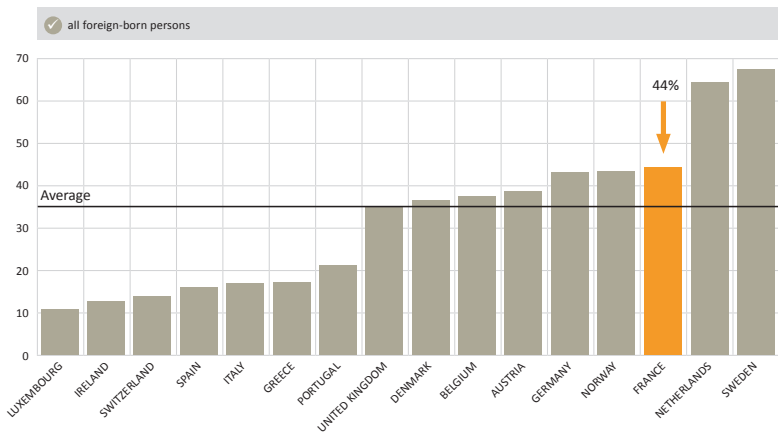
<sup>1</sup> For more information on the background and methodology see appendix and visit <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.

# 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, 44% of foreign born immigrants in France have naturalised.** This share is among the highest in the EU-15 countries, but still far below the level in the Netherlands and Sweden. Across the EU, the shares of citizenship acquisition vary considerably. Less than 20% are citizens in Greece, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland and Luxemburg. The average acquisition share in the EU-15 countries, Switzerland and Norway is 34%.

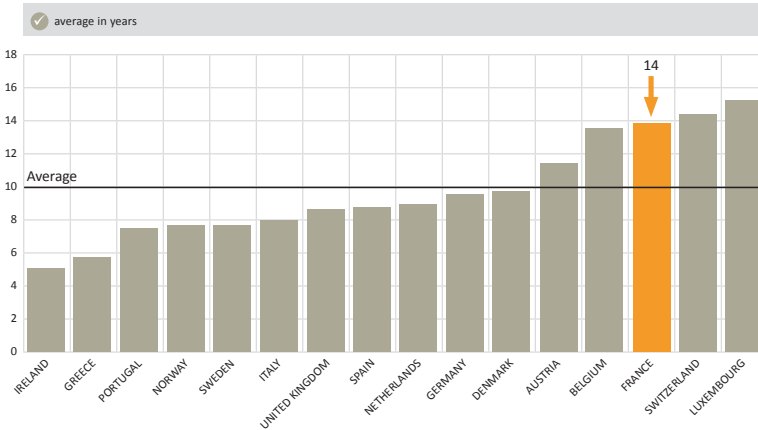
## Share of naturalised persons among first generation in EU-15, Switzerland and Norway in 2008



**It takes foreign-born immigrants on average 14 years to become citizens in France.** In EU-15 countries, Norway and Switzerland, it takes on average 10 years. Only immigrants in Switzerland and Luxemburg require more time among EU-15 countries. In contrast, in Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Norway, Sweden and Italy it takes on average below 8 years from arrival in the country to the acquisition of citizenship.

<sup>2</sup> See methodological appendix for more information.

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



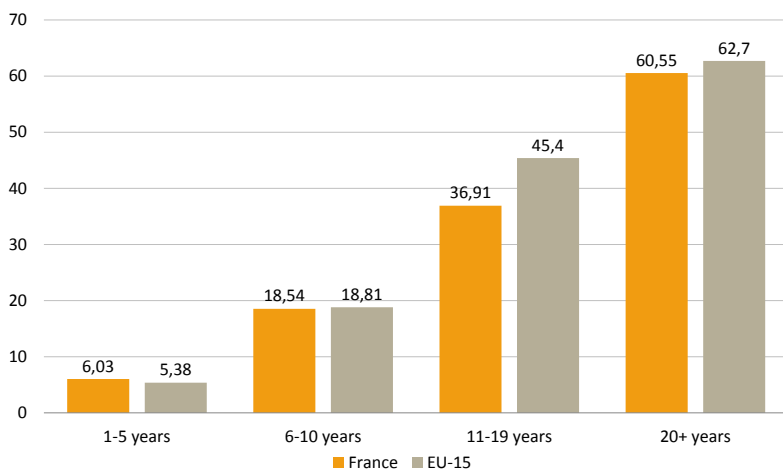
Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

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 acquire citizenship.

**First of all, residence matters:** One reason for the above-average share of naturalised persons in France is the country's comparatively long-settled first-generation population. Our multivariate analysis<sup>3</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 citizenship acquisition in France increases with residence in the country.

3 See Vink/ Prokic-Breuer/ Dronkers (2012)

## Share of citizenship acquisition by residence in France and EU-15

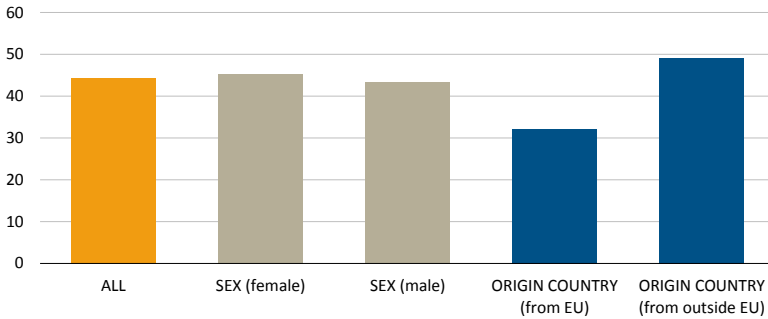


Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

**Secondly, immigrants' background plays a major role.** Another reason for the above-average share of naturalised persons in France is the large share of immigrants coming from low- or medium-developed countries. People born in developing countries tend to naturalise in Europe in general and also in France. The foreign born population that immigrated from less economically developed countries tend to naturalise more often in Europe and in France than immigrants from higher developed countries. Immigrants coming from medium and under-developed countries 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 from the time of arrival in the country than immigrants from higher developed countries. Across EU countries, the role of immigrants' backgrounds can be reflected in the different results for EU and non-EU citizens: Immigrants from outside the EU (on average from lower developed countries) are roughly 20% more likely to be citizens of France than EU citizens.

**Thirdly, Gender matters: Women are usually more likely to be citizens than men in the EU.** This is also true for France, however, to a lesser extent.

## Share of citizenship acquisition in France, by gender and country of origin



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

**Fourthly, education, employment, family status and the use of language are additional factors that influence the acquisition of citizenship.** These are other reasons for the above-average share of naturalised persons in France. People born in developing countries tend to naturalise in Europe in general and also in France. 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. These factors are significant in France where the majority of foreign-born immigrants are employed and are medium- or highly- educated. In addition, a near-majority come from countries of origin where French is one of the official languages.

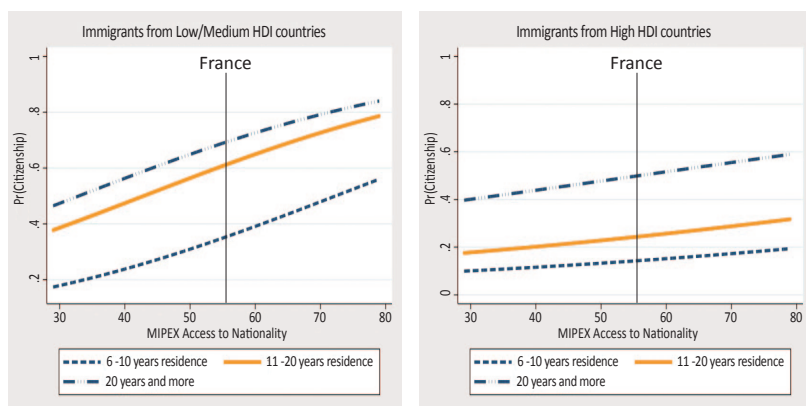
**Policies matter:** While these individual factors do play a role, **citizenship laws significantly influence how many immigrants become citizens because they determine the conditions under which immigrants can choose to naturalise.**

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>4</sup> More importantly, inclusive citizenship laws in the country of residence have a major effect on whether or not immigrants naturalise:<sup>5</sup>

4 Multiple nationality must be tolerated by both the country of origin and the country of residence.

5 Citizenship policies are measured by an adjusted score of the Migrant Integration Policy Index, see <http://www.mipex.eu/>

## Probability to acquire citizenship in EU-15 countries<sup>6</sup>



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

This graph above shows how policies affect immigrants' uptake of citizenship on average in EU-15 countries, Norway and Switzerland. **Citizenship policies matter more for immigrants from less developed countries, especially for newcomers** (as the three lines are steeper than the lines for immigrants from higher 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).

France's naturalisation laws and policies are thus the major factor determining whether immigrants become French citizens. In general, more foreign born have become citizens in France than would be expected, due to the characteristics of the foreign-born population in France. This finding implies that there is great potential for increasing the naturalisation rate if France were to facilitate the naturalisation requirements and procedure.

<sup>6</sup> 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.



## 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 birth-right 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>7</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, France has a more inclusive citizenship regime than the average EU-15<sup>8</sup> country, with the major exception of ordinary naturalisation<sup>9</sup>.** Children of French citizens (*ius sanguinis*) and children born on French territory (*ius soli*) have better access to citizenship than most countries in Europe. France, Luxembourg and Spain are the only EU-15 countries that have unrestricted *ius sanguinis* for children born in France or abroad to a French father or mother. *Ius soli* is provided automatically for the third-generation descendants (born to foreign parents if one parent was also born in France) and as an entitlement at the age of majority to the second generation (born in France to foreign born parents), as well as for foundlings, and stateless persons. Acquisition is automatic at the age of majority for children born in France who have been resident in France for five years since the age of eleven. Parents can make a declaration on behalf of the child while the child is a minor if the child has been resident for five years since age of eleven or if the child is under 16 years and has been resident in France for 5 years since age of 8. France, like most EU-15 countries, has limited grounds for the renunciation of previous citizenship.

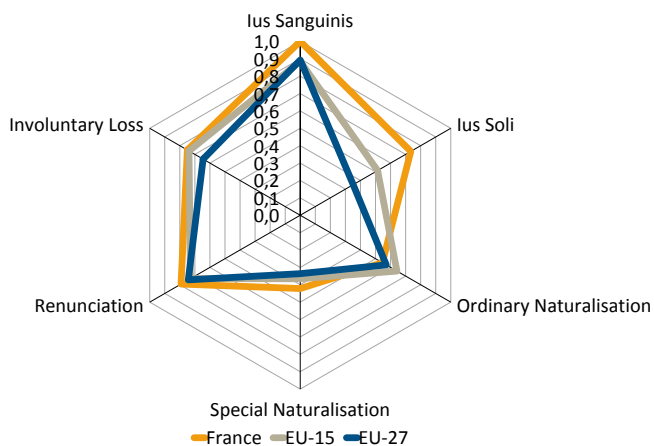
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7 See methodological appendix for more information.

8 EU-15 refers to all EU countries before the enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007.

9 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). For more comprehensive information on French citizenship law see EUDO country profile for France available at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/country-profiles/?country=France>.

## Overall results of the ACIT Citizenship Law Indicators



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

France provides preferential access to citizenship to certain groups based on their special ties or contributions to the country: Persons resident during childhood (socialisation-based acquisition), spouses and children of citizens, former and ‘good-faith’ citizens, refugees, persons with cultural affinity with special achievements for the country, and persons serving in the French army.<sup>10</sup> Minors raised in France by a citizen or by a welfare institution can declare French citizenship after five or three years of residence, respectively, minors who received five years of education in the country can also declare French citizenship (*socialisation*).

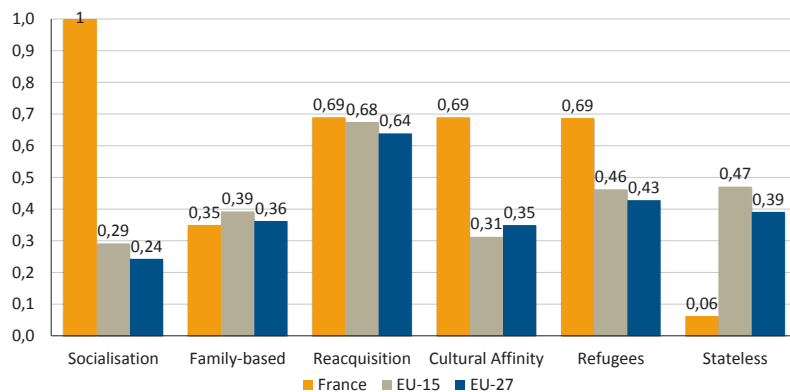
France offers slightly weaker conditions for family-based naturalisation, because the law limits child transfer and spousal extension. Spouses of citizens can make a declaration of French citizenship after four years of marriage and three years of residence in France (shorter residence requirement if spouses have been married for at least five years) if no criminal offences or ‘assimilation defects’ are recorded. Naturalised immigrants automatically extend their citizenship to children if they declare the child during the application process (*family based naturalisation*).

France provides special access to citizenship to a citizen of a country where French is the official language; the citizen speaks French as a mother tongue; or received primary education in French (*cultural affinity*).

Refugees are exempt from residence requirements (*condition de stage*) and, depending on their age, also from language requirements, but other ordinary naturalisation requirements apply.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed definitions of all categories see the comprehensive CITLAW report available online.

## Provisions for 'special naturalisation'



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

In contrast to the other ways of acquiring citizenship, **France has more restrictive requirements for ordinary naturalisation than most other EU-15 countries.** France imposes more demanding language and civic knowledge requirements, criminal record and economic resource requirements than most EU countries.<sup>11</sup>

Any conviction with a penalty of six months imprisonment or more without suspension disqualifies for naturalisation.

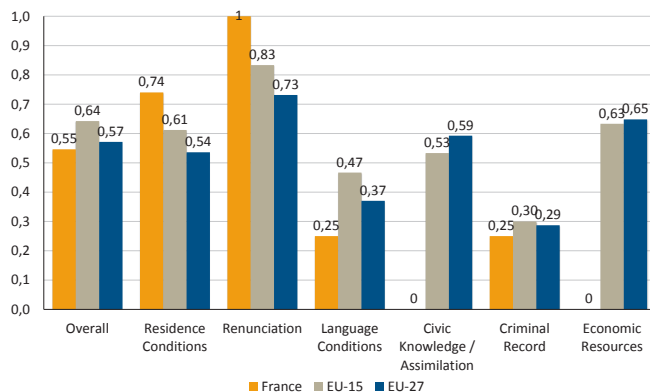
Applicants have to provide tax reports (*avis d'impôt*) for the previous years, despite the absence of a clear legal provision.

Applicants must present a linguistic diploma awarded by an institution accredited by the French State that certifies the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Most other countries demand lower levels of language or offer all applicants full support to reach the expected level. Applicants in France must sit an interview on their civic/ cultural knowledge including questions on history and culture. The new Minister in office has withdrawn the multiple choice questionnaire while the general requirement remains. There is a lack of information and study resources available for the preparation for the interview. Around half of the other European countries do not impose any citizenship/integration interview or test.

Among requirements for ordinary naturalisation, residence and renunciation requirements are fairly inclusive. Applicants are required five years of usual residence with no more than six consecutive and ten total months of absence. France has a longstanding tradition policy of accepting dual nationality, just like the majority of EU countries.

<sup>11</sup> These scores are based on legislative changes that came into effect on January 2012.

## Provisions for ordinary naturalisation



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

## Results from the National Roundtable

**Participating stakeholders focused on a few specific ordinary naturalisation requirements, their implementation, and the changes under the previous government.** The language and civic knowledge requirements were criticised as non-transparent. The French Civil Code requires ‘*prove of assimilation to the French community, especially by a sufficient knowledge, depending on her/his condition, of the French language and of the rights and duties conferred by French nationality*’. The phrase ‘depending on her/ his condition’ makes it unclear on which grounds applicants can be exempt. The level of French required for naturalisation was also seen as unclear. As of October 2011, the responsible minister set B1 as the required language level for all applicants. He also clarified that the ‘personal condition’ limitation merely provides some flexibility for applicants of how they can prove their B1 level, for example, through formal tests, education diplomas etc.

*‘Curiously, in our country, ‘according to her/his condition’ is an extraordinary opportunity. I give a typical example: A Vietnamese lady could not learn French (...). But her children are an engineer and a doctor. She could not learn French but was doing very well; she did everything for the education of her children. Today I am not sure if, with the language requirement, we still have the possibility to naturalise people who have otherwise proven real integration like that.’*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris, 7 November 2012, academic expert)

A test may not be a good way to test people’s knowledge of the rights and duties of a French citizen:

*‘We cannot prove assimilation by answering a multiple choice quiz. This kind of quiz opens the door to the worst type of temptations. We must ensure staff training because it’s not that easy to conduct an interview with objective criteria and without falling into a big brother interview with 2 000 questions on which we’ll judge the poor guy sitting there. We also need to work on a guide for the assimilation interview in order to prepare agents and migrants.’*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris, 7 November 2012, NGO)

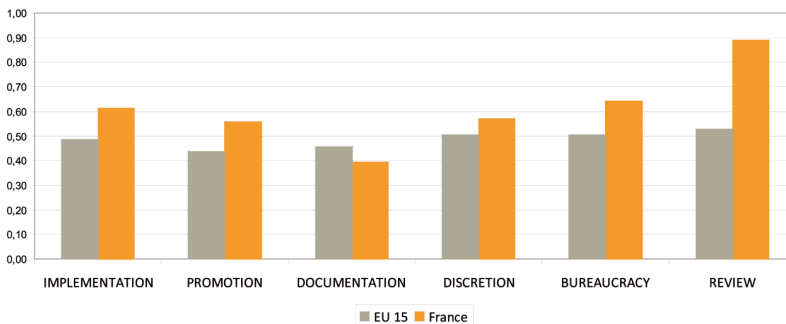
### 3. CITIZENSHIP IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS: WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURAL OBSTACLES TO ORDINARY NATURALISATION?

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>12</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, France has less practical obstacles in the naturalisation procedure compared to most EU-15 countries, with the exception of the documentation required.**<sup>13</sup>

#### Overall results of Citizenship Implementation Indicators for France and EU-15



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

France provides strong opportunities for applicants to appeal against negative decisions (judicial review). Naturalisation is slightly less bureaucratic than in most countries. On average, France does more than most EU-countries to promote citizenship and to limit discretion by authorities.

<sup>12</sup> For more information see appendix and visit <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.

<sup>13</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of citizenship procedures in France see EUDO country profile for France accessible at <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/country-profiles/?country=France>.

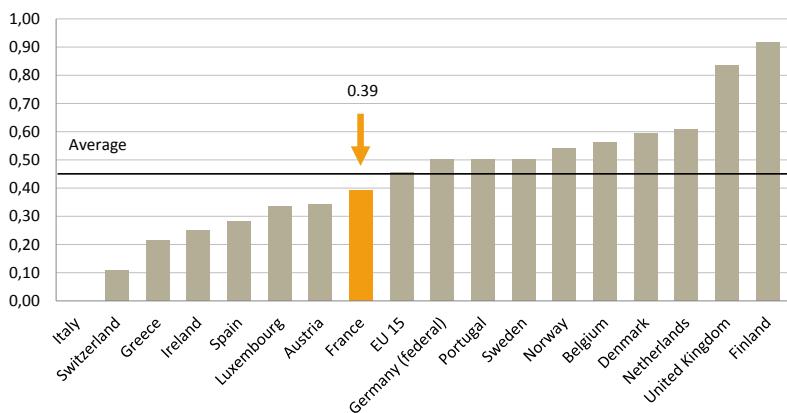
## Promotion

France promotes citizenship through ceremonies, low application costs, free courses delivered through the integration contract (*contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) and dedicated informational services ('*Services naturalisation*'). On a negative note, the French government has never launched a campaign to promote naturalisation. Print and web material has limited availability and quality. There is no online application where immigrants can check their eligibility for citizenship. The free language courses do not prepare immigrants to pass the required B1 level for naturalisation.

## Documentation

Documentation is a major obstacle in France. Only a few EU countries, such as Austria, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Luxembourg and Italy, make it more difficult for immigrants to prove that they meet the legal conditions for naturalisation. Applicants have to provide documents from the country of origin, including the criminal record for all applicants that have resided fewer than 10 years in the country. Acquiring documentation from the country of origin can involve great efforts and costs for the applicant. France also requires several years of documentation on the applicant's employment situation. France does not exempt particular vulnerable groups from providing documentation for criminal record or economic requirements. Instead of documentation from their country of origin, refugees can provide certificates of the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons.

### Documentation in EU-15



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

## Discretion

In theory, ordinary naturalisation in France remains a 'favour granted by the government'. Unlike in many EU-15 countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain, immigrants that meet all requirements have no legal entitlement to become citizens in France. Nevertheless, the discretion is partly limited due to a strong control by judicial review procedures. Therefore, France's access to citizenship is not considered to be entirely discretionary.

There is only limited discretion on language and integration requirements. Due to a 2010 process of ‘deconcentration’ (shifting competence from the central to the local level), local authorities (préfectures) now have wide ranging discretion to implement citizenship laws and to decide on individual naturalisation claims. While the formal law has not changed, but in practice there is a higher risk of less consistent implementation of requirements.

## Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy emerged as less of a problem in France compared to most EU-15 countries. The entire naturalisation procedure is located at specialised authorities (préfectures). Since July 2010, a decentralisation process is being implemented which grants local authorities (préfectures) power to refuse citizenship applications. Positive decisions are still under the power of the Minister in charge of citizenship, currently the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In October 2012, the newly appointed minister published new guidelines aiming to provide a better framework when assessing citizenship applications. However, the implementation of this procedure can still lead to variation of citizenship procedures. Also, France does impose time limits for the procedure; however, there are no penalties for authorities that violate these time limits.

## Results from the National Roundtable

Developments in the previous three years have had a significantly negative impact on ordinary naturalisation in France. According to a parliamentary report<sup>14</sup>, naturalisation rates have dropped by 45% between 2010 and 2012. According to the author (MP Patrick Mennucci), the drop cannot be explained by new criteria established in the 2011 citizenship reform<sup>15</sup> since the new law has not yet had any impact. Mr. Mennucci (Member of Parliament and author of the parliamentary report) blamed stricter assessment of the criteria as a result of internal ministerial instructions sent by emails and unsigned letters.

*‘I think deconcentration will be subject of a highly critical report. So this leads to paradoxical things we did not have in France before. People had the address of “right” préfectures. We knew that it was better to apply in the Perigord than in Bobigny.’*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris,  
7 November 2012, academic expert)

*‘We cannot both speak about French citizenship and have criteria that are not understandable for everyone. They must be clear. It is a question of respect for the foreigners who want French nationality.’*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris,  
7 November 2012, academic expert)

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14 ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE, rapport sur l’immigration, l’intégration et l’accès à la nationalité Française, M. Patrick Mennucci (SRC, Bouches-du-Rhône, October 2012? <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/budget/plf2013/a0258-tIV.asp>

15 Loi du 16 juin 2011 relative à l’immigration, à l’intégration et à la nationalité aka loi Besson.

*'Transparency is the main issue, because the assessment criteria are not really known by foreigners wishing to become French citizen. Guidelines are always confidential. Sometimes circulars (guidelines) are not published. (...) It prevents associations to provide aid to people, who wish to become French citizen, to access these data. And maybe, part of these instructions should be translated in a public language, eventually through a debate on these criteria, which are actually deduced from law or case-law.'*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris,  
7 November 2012, civil servant)

The assessment of the mentioned decentralisation process that started in 2010 is still under review. Most participants predict negative outcomes. According to civil servants, however, it seems that there would be 'no way back' to the old procedure since the central administration in charge of citizenship has now lost 25% of its staff.

The 'decentralisation' process in France is perceived to have made transparency worse.

*'I'd like to raise the issue of the differences of treatment by the prefecture and the agents' training. (...) We're talking about the new circular (guideline) which induces many changes compared to the required resources and precarious people, but it's still the same, the interpretation is still at the discretion of the agent. We have nothing that is clear or readable. I think there is a necessary modification, in order to introduce a common training with clarity and visibility.'*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris,  
7 November 2012, civil servant)

*'About deconcentration, we did not make an assessment yet. We are expecting a report from the general inspection, which will give us a comprehensive assessment of the deconcentration system. We are not totally satisfied with the way we managed the deconcentration process, since there is still significant differences among préfetures. So all préfetures do not deal with naturalisation issues in the same way. This is creating territorial disparities, which is uncomfortable from an equality point of view. I think that it is a real issue we will have to look at. I do not believe we can move backward, simple because, my (national) direction (unit) lost a quarter of its workforce.'*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris,  
7 November 2012, Civil Servant)

*'Patrick Mennucci (member of the French national assembly) went to the prefecture (local administration), it is absolutely horrible. Interviews of applicants do not take place in proper conditions. But, we have not taken the final step of deconcentration, since we exercise a complete review of decisions adopted by préfetures. We still have the possibility to overturn these decisions. We are still in the process of double instruction for some large préfetures. Half of the applicants who have been refused or adjourned make an administrative appeal. The other half does not find their way through the system.'*

(Participant of the ACIT National Roundtable in Paris,  
7 November 2012, civil servant)

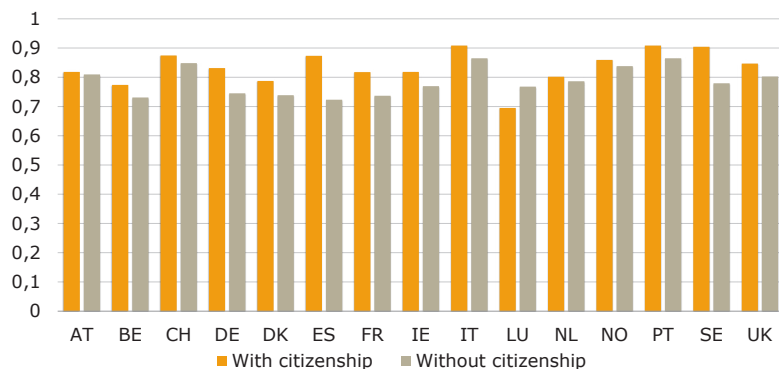


## 4. CITIZENSHIP INTEGRATION INDICATORS: DOES CITIZENSHIP MATTER FOR INTEGRATION?

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>16</sup>

**In most countries, immigrants who have naturalised are often better off than immigrants who have not naturalised.** This is true 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.

**Figure 11. Employment of foreign-born immigrants after statistical controls in EU-15**



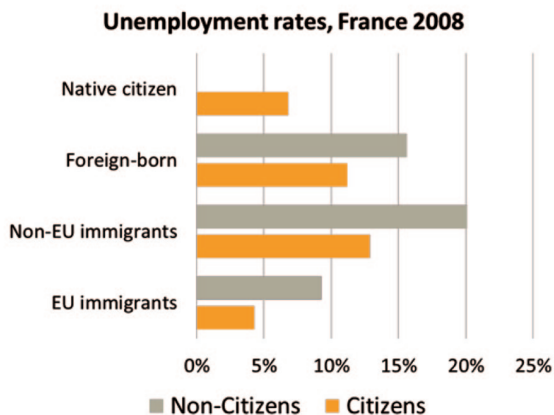
Source: ACIT  
conference  
presentation

Overall, 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>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The handbook features a selection of Citizenship Integration indicators. For more information see appendix and <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>.

<sup>17</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>.

**Figure 12. Unemployment Rates in France, 2008 (%)**

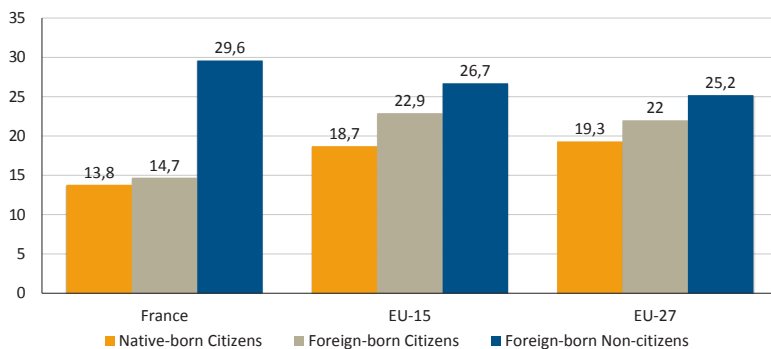


Source: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators>

The unemployment rate is much higher for non-citizens in France compared to immigrants that have naturalised. This is especially true for non-EU citizens. The gap in unemployment between foreign-born non-citizens and native-born citizens in France (+8.9%) is the largest of any country in the EU.

Naturalised immigrants also have better housing conditions than immigrants that are not citizens. Housing cost burden measures the average proportion of monthly disposable household income spent on monthly housing costs. Non-citizen immigrants spend a much larger share of their monthly income on housing than naturalised immigrants and native-born citizens. The difference is larger in France than in most other EU-15 countries. Naturalised foreign born have a similar housing cost burden than native-born citizens.

**Figure 13. Average share of monthly income spent on housing costs, France 2008 (%)**



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

In France, 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 is a country's citizenship policy. While immigrants from less developed countries are more likely to apply, among them, the 'better integrated' do. Thus, citizenship does not appear to be an adverse selection process across countries; instead the most integrated immigrants become citizens no matter how demanding are the naturalisation requirements.

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 irrespective 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>18</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.

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18 For more detail, see the OECD publication 'A passport for the better integration of immigrants?' (2011).

## KEY RESULTS:

1. On average, citizenship laws are more inclusive in France than in most EU-15 countries with the exception of demanding language and integration requirements for ordinary naturalisation.
2. Providing documentation required for ordinary naturalisation is a greater practical obstacle in France than in most other EU countries. Applicants have to obtain more documents from their country of origin, including on criminal record. They have to provide extensive proof of employment over several years and particular vulnerable groups are not exempt from criminal record or economic requirements.
3. The transparency of the requirements and 'decentralisation' were raised by stakeholders as the major citizenship issues in France today. Local authorities apply laws differently which leads to unequal treatment of applicants. Exemptions for the language requirements are often not transparent. Conditions for refusal are not always clear and internal guidelines are not public.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FRANCE TERRE D'ASILE

The ACIT project took place while access to citizenship was still high in the French political agenda. This handbook mentions the political changes that concerned citizenship policy during last couple of years. These changes and the political use of citizenship law are a threat to social cohesion while they create suspicion among migrants that applied or wish to apply for French citizenship. Crucial citizenship policy should be subject to a wider public and parliamentary debates. This handbook and previous reports published by the MPG (MIPEX, Immigrant Citizens Survey) underlined the discretionary power of French authorities in this matter and the lack of legal security. More transparency and fairness are key for a welcoming policy towards those who want to become new members of the national community.

## 1. Policy changes for a more open and fair citizenship policy

- Citizenship policy should be more clearly separated from immigration policies. There has been a growing confusion between access to citizenship and restrictive immigration rules as the same authorities, at national and local level, are dealing with both.
- France should provide automatic access to citizenship for foreigners born abroad who were raised in France.
- France should provide the same preferential access to citizenship for stateless persons as it does for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.
- France should ratify the 1961 Convention on the reduction of statelessness.
- The reception and integration contract should be a tool for immigrants' path to citizenship. Training provided in the framework of this contract, more particularly language classes should be better designed to support foreigners to meet the naturalisation criteria.

## 2. Transparent and public rules of assessment of citizenship policy

- Data on admission, rejection and deferment rates should be published in the annual report to the Parliament on immigration and integration.
- Based on the evaluation in process, the government should take any relevant decision in order to reverse the growing discrepancies in decision-making.
- Citizenship decisions should respect fundamental principles of EU law including equality and proportionality and be subject to judicial review in accordance with Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Clear guidelines should be published about the integration interviews in order to harmonise practises and avoid unequal implementation and treatment in local administrations.
- Clear interpretation of the requirements for citizenship, including case-law, should be made public in accessible language to assist applicants in the procedure.

## CITIZENSHIP ACQUISITION INDICATORS

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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)

