

Amendment of Act LV of 1993 on Hungarian Citizenship

Under Article 6(3) of the Hungarian Constitution, “The Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside its borders and shall promote and foster their relations with Hungary.” Over the past 20 years, Hungarians living around the world and in the Carpathian Basin formulated the need, from time to time, for a simplified naturalisation procedure similar to the practice of other countries as a significant assistance in maintaining relations with Hungary and preserving their Hungarian identity.

On 26 May 2010 the Hungarian National Assembly approved with an overwhelming majority the amendment of Act LV of 1993 on Hungarian citizenship and introduced a simplified naturalisation procedure.

Every state is free to decide whom it accepts as a citizen, thus this amendment does not violate any international law and fully complies with the European Convention on Nationality passed by the Council of Europe in 1997.

The arrangement introduced by this amendment is familiar and applied increasingly frequently in various countries both in and outside the European Union.

The pre-amendment version of the Hungarian Citizenship Act also granted preferential acquisition of Hungarian citizenship. As has been the case so far, the procedure shall commence upon individual request, with Hungarian authorities processing each application in the context of a well regulated procedure.

This new regulation has simplified the procedure and reduced the administrative burden. Every non-Hungarian citizen is eligible for preferential naturalisation if

- he or any of his ancestors was a Hungarian citizen or if he serves reason to believe his or her origin is from Hungary,
- he proves his knowledge of the Hungarian language,
- he has no criminal record and is not under prosecution,
- his naturalisation does not violate the public and national security of Hungary.

Simplified naturalisation does not mean that a citizen automatically becomes an elector. Suffrage is subject to a registered residence in Hungary. The simplified procedure does not automatically provide a Hungarian passport; every citizen must apply for one in a special procedure after acquisition of citizenship. Simplified naturalisation is merely a possibility. To apply for citizenship is a matter of individual discretion.

Applications for naturalisation may be filed with

- any Hungarian registrar,
- any regional directorate of the Office of Immigration and Naturalisation, or
- any consular officer at Hungary’s foreign diplomatic missions.

Applications shall be adjudged by the President of the Republic on recommendation of the Minister of Public Administration and Justice.