

Amendments to the Norwegian Nationality Act

An overview of the most important amendments to the Norwegian Nationality Act in relation to the previous Act.

The Norwegian Storting has passed a new Act relating to Norwegian nationality. The new Act applies from 1 September 2006, and replaces the Act of 1950. Applications submitted before 1 September 2006 will be processed pursuant to the Act which is most favourable for the applicant. This means that applicants who do not meet the conditions for citizenship pursuant to the previous Act, may be granted citizenship if they meet the conditions of the new Act.

You must, as a rule, meet the following conditions in order to acquire Norwegian citizenship:

- Have documented or clarified your identity
- Be at least 12 years old (or have parental consent if you are under the age of 18)
- Live in Norway and intend to continue living here
- Meet the conditions for a settlement permit. This does not apply to applicants with permits pursuant to the EEA/ EFTA regulations
- Have spent a total of seven years in Norway during the last ten years
- Have shown good conduct
- Be released from your original nationality.

Clarification of identity

The new Act requires that applicants provide documentary evidence or otherwise clarify their identity. This was not stipulated in the previous Act, but is nonetheless a continuation of the practice which has applied for a long time.

Age requirement

The age requirement for being granted Norwegian citizenship irrespective of parents' nationality has been lowered from 18 to 12 years of age in the new Act. Parental consent must still be given for applications from applicants under 18 years of age. As before, there is no lower age limit for children applying together with their parents.

Citizenship from parents

Children are now automatically granted Norwegian citizenship at birth if one of their parents is a Norwegian citizen. Previously, a child was not automatically granted Norwegian citizenship via his/her Norwegian father if the parents were not married.

Period of residence

The requirement for a seven-year period of residence is unchanged from the previous Act. However, the new Act stipulates that applicants must have resided in Norway for seven years on residence permits issued for at least one year during the course of the last ten years. Periods spent abroad of two months or less in the course of a calendar year are irrelevant. If the total amount of time spent abroad during the course of a calendar year exceeds two months, the entire period is deducted when calculating the period of residence. As before, the requirements are less stringent for, among others, persons who have previously held Norwegian citizenship, persons who are married to, are a registered partner or cohabitant of a Norwegian citizen, citizens of Nordic countries, children under the age of 18 years and persons who are stateless.

The principle of one nationality

The principle that a person shall only have one nationality is a continuation of the previous Act. However, this principle will be more stringently enforced than before. In concrete terms, this means that citizenship granted on condition that an applicant is subsequently released from citizenship of another state will be revoked if the applicant cannot provide documentation of release.

Settlement permit

This requirement is met if the applicant meets the conditions for a settlement permit. In other words, the applicant is not required to have obtained a separate decision on a settlement permit.

Requirement for Norwegian language skills

Everyone applying for Norwegian citizenship after 1 September 2008 must be able to document that they have completed 300 hours of tuition in the Norwegian

language and social studies or be able to document that they have sufficient knowledge of Norwegian or Sami. The requirement only applies to applicants between the ages of 18 and 55. Information about Norwegian language tuition is available on the IMDi website.

Child maintenance debt

It is no longer a requirement that an applicant has no child maintenance debt.

Notification

The possibility of becoming Norwegian by notification is not continued in the new Act, with the exception of Nordic citizens who may do so pursuant to an agreement between the Nordic countries. As in the case of ordinary applications, notifications are submitted to the police who then forward them to the Directorate of Immigration for processing. County governors will no longer process notifications concerning citizenship. See Proposition no 41 to the Odelsting (2004-2005) subsection 4.3 on citizenship by notification.

Ceremony

A voluntary ceremony has been introduced, at which new Norwegian citizens may make an oath of allegiance.

How can I be released from my original citizenship?

The practice varies from country to country. Contact the authorities in your home country for information about the rules and how to proceed in order to be released from your original citizenship.

Further questions?

If you have any more questions, you can contact the police or the Information Service for applicants in UDI by e-mail ots@udi.no or phone 23 35 16 00.

Frequently asked questions

If a child has a Norwegian mother or father when it is born, is it necessary to notify the authorities in order to ensure that the child becomes a Norwegian citizen?

No, the child is Norwegian by birth. In order for the child to obtain a Norwegian passport, an application must be submitted to the police, or a Norwegian foreign service mission for residents abroad.

If the child has a Norwegian father or mother at birth but is not born in or lives in Norway, does the child automatically become a Norwegian citizen?

Yes, the child will have Norwegian citizenship irrespective of whether he/she is born in Norway or abroad. Whether or not the parents are married is irrelevant. Norwegian citizenship will be forfeited at the age of 22 years if the person concerned has never lived in Norway. However, it is possible to apply for and retain Norwegian citizenship.

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Last updated: 10.08.2007