



Global Immigration alert

August 2024

Germany

Reform to citizenship laws expected to lead to application processing delays

Executive summary

In August 2024, multiple naturalization authorities in Germany announced that they expect significant increases in the volume of citizenship applications being filed and, consequently, longer processing times for these applications, following a reform to the country's citizenship law in late June 2024.

Key developments

The [reform](#) makes it easier for third-country nationals (i.e., nationals of countries outside the EU and EEA) to obtain German citizenship. Among other changes, the new law reduces the lead time required for applicants to become German citizens and allows these individuals (as well as German nationals) to hold multiple citizenships.

The reforms do not impact certain pre-existing eligibility requirements, and applicants are still required to have:

- ▶ Acknowledged the democratic principle ("free democratic basic order") of Germany and Germany's special historical responsibility for the National Socialist regime and its consequences.
- ▶ German language skills of at least the B1 level.
- ▶ Knowledge of Germany's legal and social order and living conditions in the country (e.g., through the naturalization test ("Einbürgerungstest")).
- ▶ Sufficient means of subsistence without recourse to public social assistance. The following individuals are exempt from this requirement: (1) applicants who have worked in Germany full time for at least 20 months in the 24 months prior to filing their application; (2) foreign workers and

their spouses who entered Germany on the basis of a bilateral agreement on the recruitment and placement of workers on or before 30 June 1974, or as a contract worker on or before 13 June 1990, and have not claimed public social assistance.

- ▶ No criminal convictions (limited exemptions may apply for minor convictions).

Impact on employers

The recent reforms are expected to simplify and reduce the time associated with the citizenship application process. However, due to increases in application volumes, government processing (and overall) timelines may be impacted. As an advantage, the obligation for employers to track German work authorization rights for employees who have obtained German citizenship will become obsolete. Retaining their original citizenship(s) will also allow employees to work for their employers in their current country/countries of citizenship without being subject to immigration requirements. Employers may consider supporting employees' citizenship applications to simplify their immigration compliance requirements.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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