

NATURALISATION (CITIZENSHIP) IN CYPRUS: NEW LEGISLATION



Naturalisation (Citizenship) in Cyprus: New Legislation

On the 30th of November 2023, an amendment to the Civil Registry Law (the “Law”) was voted by the Parliament and came into force on 19/12/2023. The amendment of the Law includes provisions allowing highly skilled foreign individuals to apply for Cypriot citizenship if they resided in Cyprus for a shorter timeframe of 3 - 4 years (depending on Greek language knowledge), as opposed to the previous requirement which was 7 years.

1. New requirements to apply for Cyprus citizenship for High-Skilled Individuals

To apply for Cyprus citizenship under the amended Law, applicants must:

- Be employed at a company included in the relevant decision of the Council of Ministers.
- Legally and continuously reside in Cyprus for 12 months prior to the submission of their application. Permitted absences not exceeding a total of 90 days in the above-mentioned period.
- Have a clean criminal record and no arrest warrants issued against them or be included in a sanctions list.
- Have not entered or left the Republic from any illegal/closed airports and ports.
- Pose no danger to public order and safety.
- Have adequate accommodation in Cyprus.
- Have stable financial resources to sustain oneself and dependents.
- Understand Cyprus’s modern political and social landscape, evaluated through a committee interview.
- Pass a Greek Language test as below:
 - Level A2: can apply for Cypriot citizenship after **four** years.
 - Level B1 can apply for Cypriot citizenship after **three** years.

It shall be noted that the above list is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list of all the criteria required for the application for naturalisation as Cyprus citizen but is intended to highlight the key amendments in the revised Law.

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2. Family Members of High-Skilled Individuals

The amended Law also includes provisions allowing the family members of the highly skilled individuals to submit a citizenship application.

Family members (including spouses, civil partners, and adult dependent children) may apply for Citizenship on the basis of Years of Residency in Cyprus after completing a period with the same criteria as the highly skilled individual.

3. Timeline for examination of applications

Fast Track Examination: The citizenship applications under the new Law are to be examined **under a “fast track” process not exceeding eight months.**

4. Citizenship due to Years of Residence in Cyprus

The amended Law also introduces an updated regime for citizenship applications due to years of residence in the Republic for individuals who legally reside in Cyprus under other residency schemes.

Applicants should legally and continuously reside in Cyprus for a period of 12 months preceding their naturalization application, however, contrary to the old regime, periods of absence from the Republic not exceeding a total of 90 days in the previous year are not considered as interruptions in the legal residence.

5. Next Steps

The Civil Registry and Migration Department is expected to issue additional guidelines to inform about the procedure and the specific criteria.

6. Disclaimer

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