



Global Immigration alert

May 2024

Finland

Automated decision-making for some citizenship applications, proposal to tighten requirements for citizenship

Executive summary

Effective 2 May 2024, qualifying third-country nationals began receiving automated decisions on their citizenship applications if they meet certain criteria. The Finnish government also recently submitted a proposal to the parliament proposing stricter requirements to obtain citizenship.

Automated decisions for citizenship applications

Third-country nationals who file citizenship applications may receive an automated decision if they meet the following criteria:

- ▶ They submitted the application and paid the processing fee online.
- ▶ Their application includes all necessary details and documents, and the Finnish Immigration Service does not need to request additional information from other government departments when processing the application.
- ▶ They are aged 18 or above and do not have any co-applicants (i.e., are not applying with anyone else).
- ▶ They submitted the application on or after 2 May 2024.
- ▶ They do not hold a non-disclosure for personal safety reasons (i.e., disclosure of their personal information is not restricted by the Finnish Population Information System based on their request).

Proposal to tighten requirements for citizenship

On 18 April 2024, the government proposed the following changes to Finland's citizenship rules:

- ▶ In general, third-country nationals would be required to reside in Finland for at least eight years (up from five years currently) to qualify for citizenship.

- ▶ Third-country nationals who seek to apply for citizenship would be able to spend no more than 365 days abroad during the required eight years of residence in Finland, and no more than 90 days abroad during the year preceding their citizenship application. Currently, third-country nationals qualify for citizenship if they have lived in Finland without interruption for the required period with a valid residence permit (with exceptions for permitted periods spent abroad).
- ▶ Children aged 15 or over, spouses of Finnish citizens, stateless persons and applicants who meet the language requirement would need to reside in Finland for at least five years (up from four years currently) to qualify for citizenship.
- ▶ For certain individuals, only the time that they have spent in Finland with a valid residence permit would be considered when assessing whether they meet the requirements for citizenship. This amendment would affect individuals who have been granted international protection in Finland and those in some rare situations as specified by the authorities, who seek to apply for citizenship.

These changes must be approved by the parliament before they become law. Separately, the Finnish government is [considering changes](#) to tighten the requirements to obtain permanent residence permits. The government is expected to propose these changes to the parliament in spring 2025.

Impact on employers

The issuance of automated decisions is expected to reduce the time and administrative requirements associated with obtaining Finnish citizenship for qualifying third-country nationals. If the proposal to tighten the citizenship requirements is approved, impacted individuals will be subject to heightened eligibility requirements when applying to obtain a Finnish citizenship.

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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