

Global Immigration alert

September 2026

The better the question. The better the answer.
The better the world works.

Ireland

Ireland approves drafting of Citizenship Amendment Bill proposing stricter naturalization requirements

Executive summary

On 9 September 2026, the Irish government approved the priority drafting of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2026. The proposed legislation would amend the eligibility requirements for Irish citizenship by naturalization, including changes to residence, language, civics and self-sufficiency criteria.

The bill will now proceed to publication and pre-legislative scrutiny before progressing through the legislative process. If enacted, the reforms would represent a significant change to Ireland's naturalization regime and may impact workforce planning for employers that rely on internationally mobile talent.

Background

Ireland's current Irish citizenship by naturalization framework allows eligible applicants to apply after accumulating five years of reckonable residence (i.e., periods of lawful residence in Ireland that count toward eligibility for citizenship by naturalization).

Key developments

The proposed legislation would:

- Increase the qualifying period of reckonable residence for most citizenship applicants from five years to eight years.
- Introduce language testing requirements, requiring applicants to demonstrate proficiency in English, Irish or Irish Sign Language.
- Introduce a civics, society and politics test as part of the naturalization process. The government has indicated that citizenship tests in Europe commonly cover areas, such as national history, political institutions, constitutional principles, rights and responsibilities, and culture and society.
- Require applicants seeking citizenship by naturalization to satisfy a self-sufficiency requirement.

The Irish government has stated that the proposed amendments are intended to strengthen the naturalization system and

align Ireland more closely with citizenship frameworks operating in several other European countries.

The timing of the bill's enactment or implementation remains uncertain and will be determined through the parliamentary process.

Impact on employers

While the proposed changes would not affect Irish visa, residence permission or employment permit requirements, extending the residence requirement from five to eight years could delay eligibility for Irish citizenship for many foreign employees and their family members.

As a result, affected individuals may remain subject to immigration-related requirements for a longer period before becoming eligible for citizenship. The changes could also influence future business travel options, depending on the travel privileges associated with an individual's current nationality. In addition, the introduction of language and civics tests may require applicants to undertake additional preparation before applying for 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.

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multi-disciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

All in to shape the future with confidence.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

© 2026 EYGM Limited.
All Rights Reserved.

SCORE 115044-26-GBL

2101-3682263
ED None

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as accounting, tax, legal or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

ey.com

Sinead Langan

Director, Head of Immigration
Tel: +353 1 221 2443
Email: sinead.langan@ie.ey.com

Aislinn Stanton

Director, Immigration
Tel: +353 1 221 1602
Email: aislinn.stanton@ie.ey.com

Michael Rooney

Partner, People Advisory Services
Tel: +353 1 221 2857
Email: michael.rooney@ie.ey.com

Rachel Dillon

Partner, People Advisory Services
Tel: +353 1 221 2554
Email: rachel.dillon@ie.ey.com

Sarah Connellan

Partner, People Advisory Services
Tel: +353 1 221 1514
Email: sarah.connellan@ie.ey.com

Ben Willis

Partner, EY Global Immigration Competency Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 9589
Email: ben.willis@uk.ey.com