

Pathways to citizenship through naturalisation in Ireland

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EMN Estonia Conference

Citizenship and Migration – Today and Tomorrow

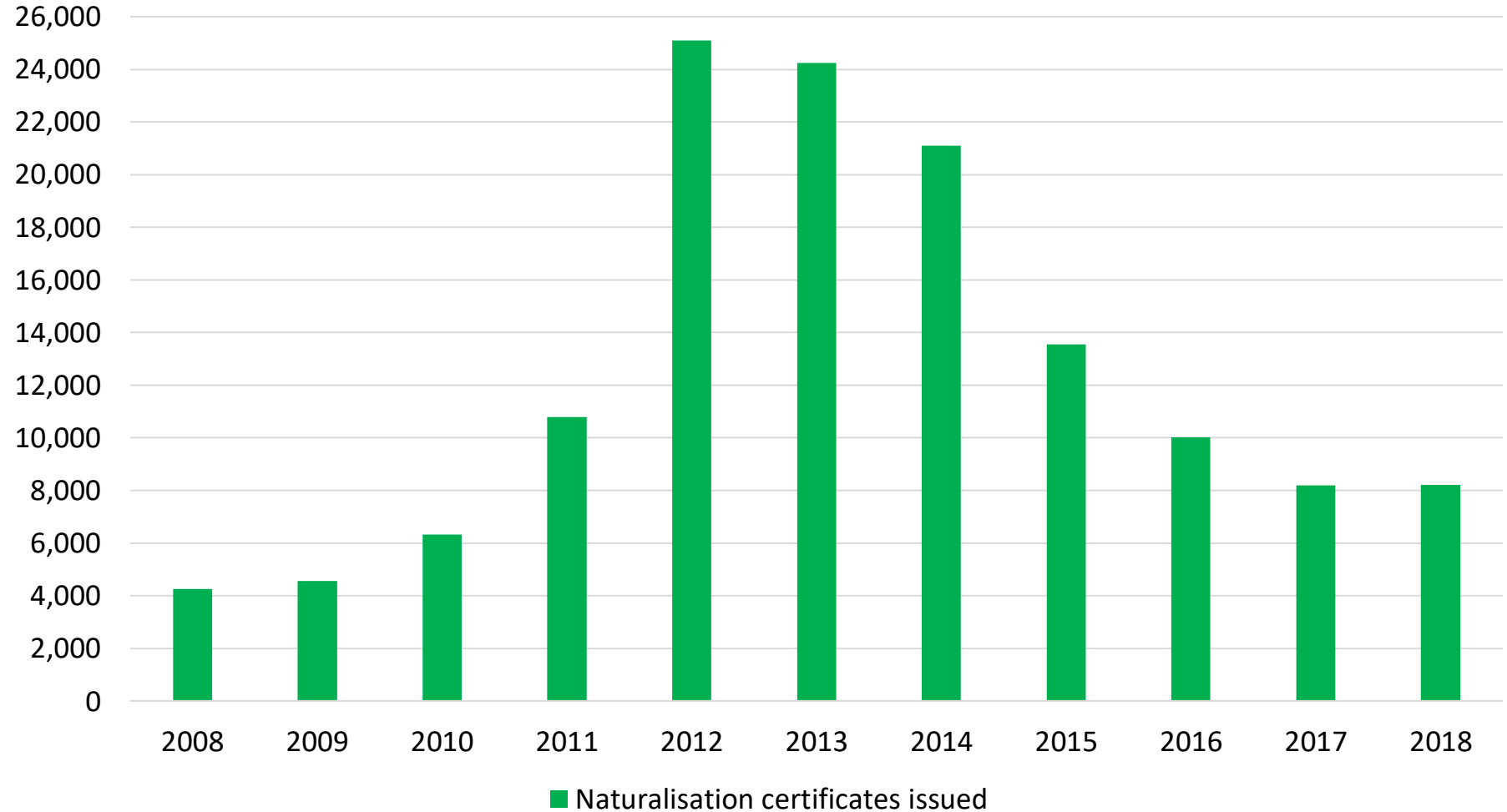
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Presentation overview

- Recent trends
- Overview of framework and conditions for naturalisation
- Processing of applications
- Citizenship ceremonies
- Conclusions

Acquisition of citizenship through naturalisation in Ireland



Source: Department of Justice and Equality



An tSeinm Dlí agus Cúir
agus Comharthaíochtaí
Department of Justice and Equality



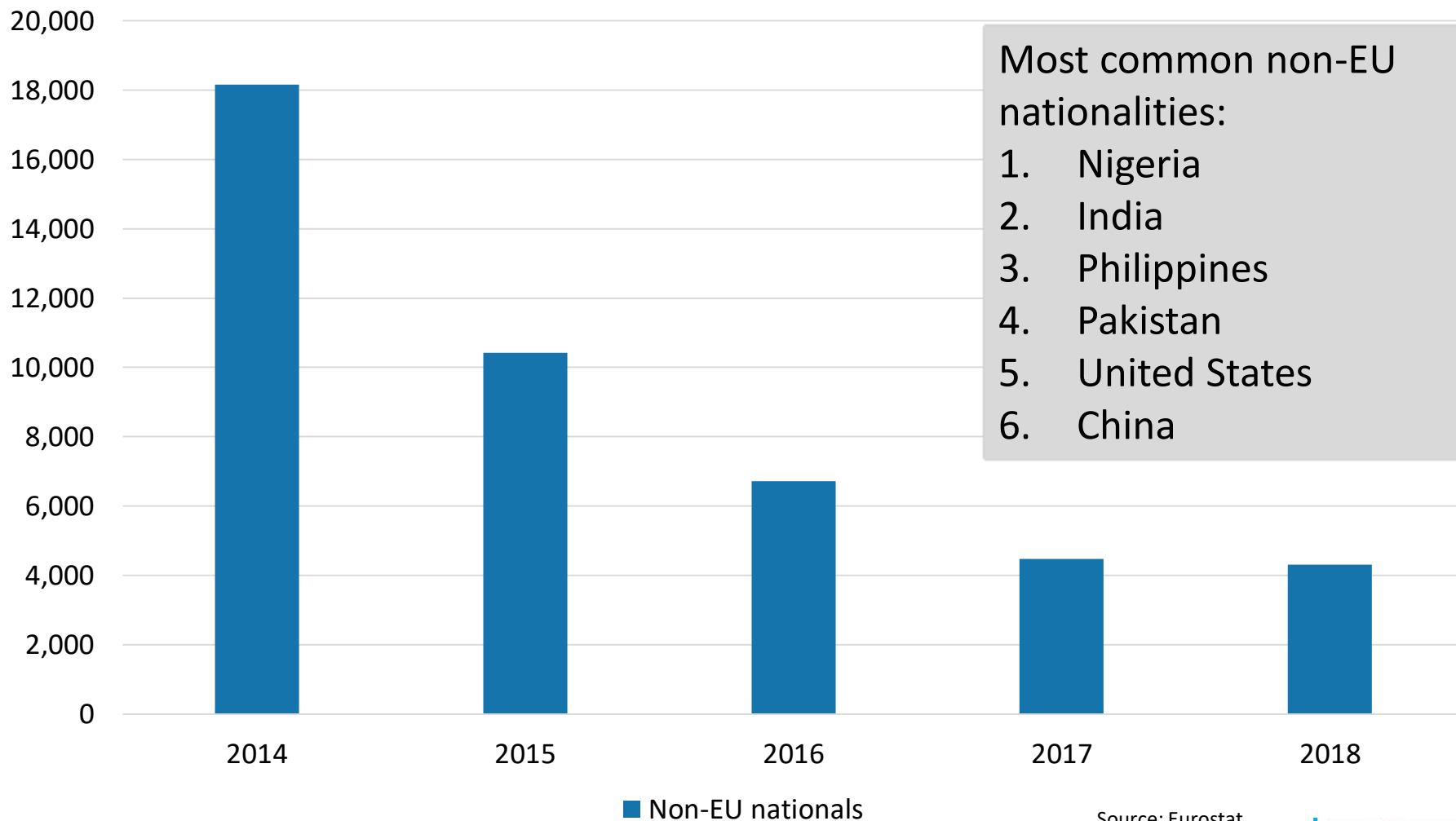
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[European Migration Network \(EMN\) Ireland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-migration-network-ireland)

Decrease in acquisition of Irish citizenship by non-EU nationals...



Most common non-EU nationalities:

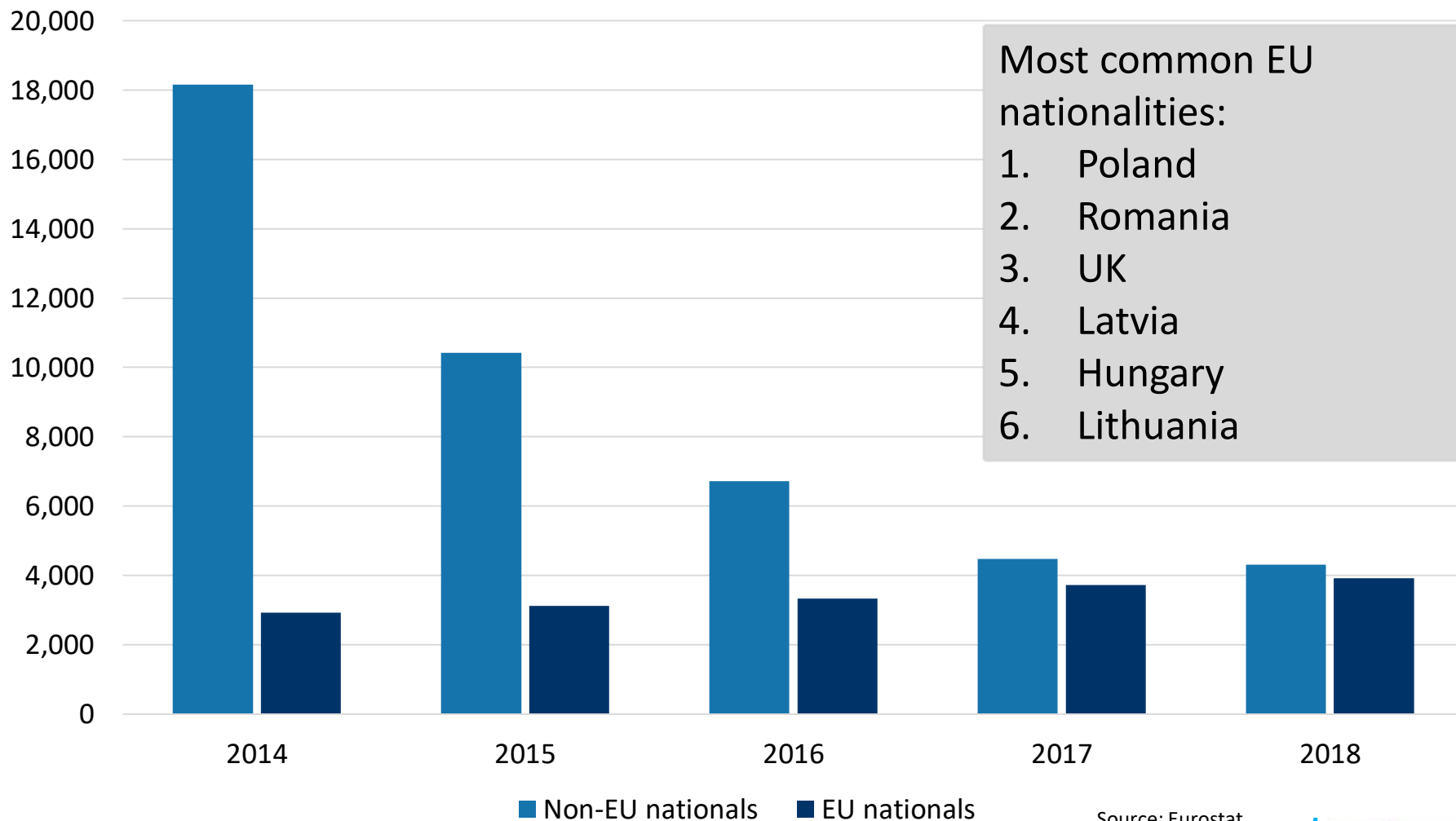
1. Nigeria
2. India
3. Philippines
4. Pakistan
5. United States
6. China

■ Non-EU nationals

Source: Eurostat



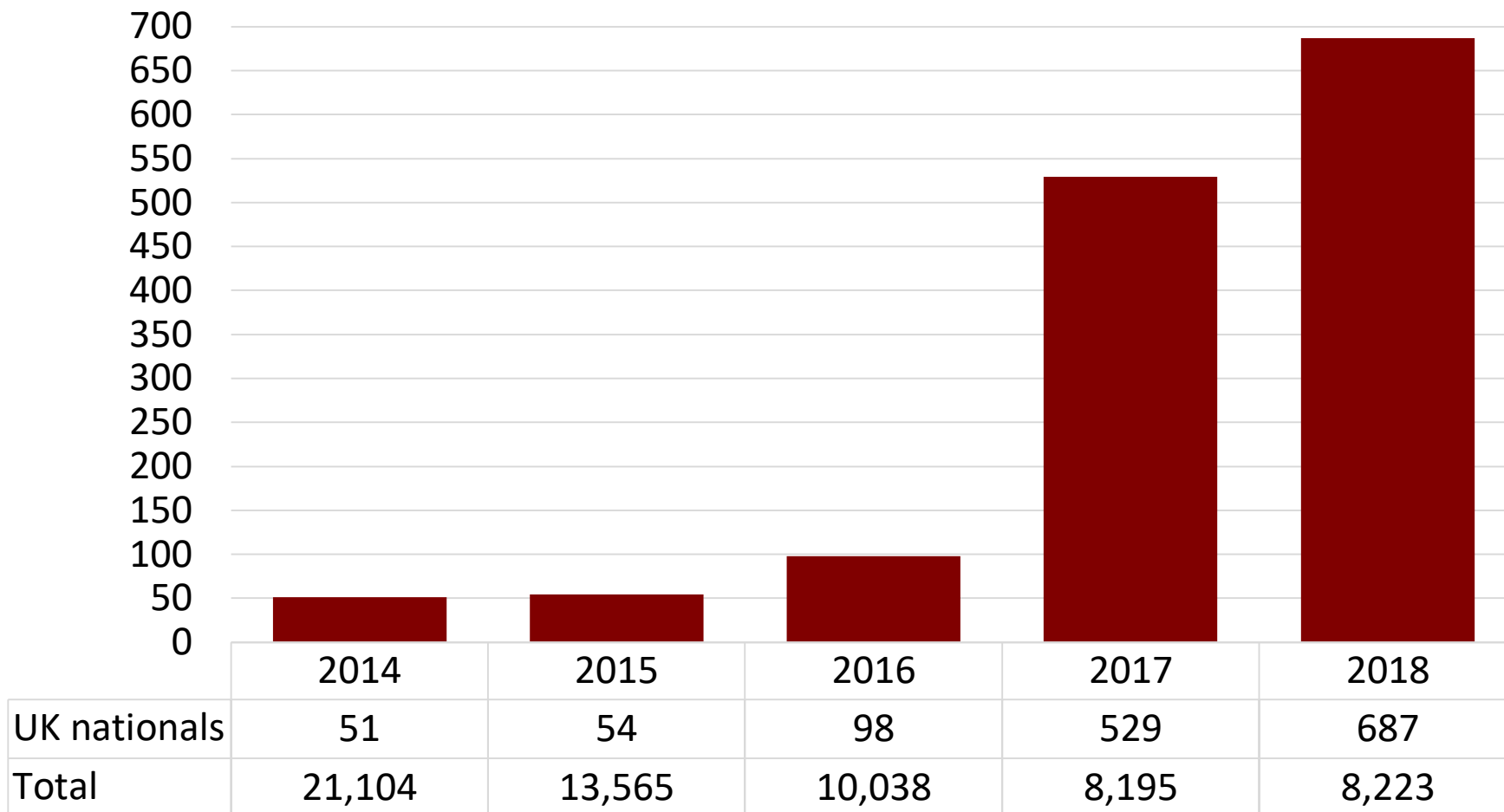
...but increase in acquisition of Irish citizenship by EU nationals



Most common EU nationalities:

1. Poland
2. Romania
3. UK
4. Latvia
5. Hungary
6. Lithuania

Particular increase in acquisition of Irish citizenship by UK nationals



Source: Eurostat



- *Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956 (as amended)*
- Naturalisation conditions:
 - Age 18+ or a child born in Ireland
 - Of good character
 - 5 years residence
 - Intend to continue to reside in Ireland
 - Declare fidelity and loyalty to the State & undertake to observe laws and respect democratic values
- Minister for Justice has discretion to grant naturalisation
- Minister may waive conditions if: refugee, stateless person, child of naturalised parents, person of ‘Irish descent or associations’

- 5 years residence (3 years for spouses/civil partners)
- Residence must be ‘reckonable’; some residence not included:
 - Residence without legal residence permission
 - Residence as a student
 - Residence as asylum-seeker, unless recognised as a refugee
- Final year must be ‘continuous’
 - Interpretation of ‘continuous’ was focus of recent case *Jones v Minister for Justice and Equality* [2019]
 - Absences of up to six weeks permitted
 - Criticised by NGOs and legal practitioners as too restrictive

Good character

- Good character is not defined
- Information is obtained from the Irish police to assess the applicant's criminal record (if any)
- Applicants must supply details in their application form relating to their character, such as: convictions in the State or other countries; if they have been the subject of a police investigation
- Failure to satisfy the good character requirement is among the top reasons for refusals in Ireland

Other requirements?

- Economic considerations
 - No requirement in law
 - However, applicants are required to submit proof of their sources of income / social welfare
- No requirement to renounce other citizenship
- No integration-related requirements:
 - Applicants are not required to demonstrate language proficiency or knowledge of Irish society
 - However, considered as part of Migrant Integration Strategy 2017-2020

- Paper-based application to Department of Justice
- Fees:
 - €175 application fee
 - €950 fee for certificate of naturalisation
 - €200 for child and widow/widower
 - Waived for refugees and stateless persons
- No maximum processing time set out in law
- 6 months up to 2019 → 12 months in 2020
- Significant delays in some cases reported by NGOs

Citizenship ceremonies

- Introduced in 2011 to give recognition to the importance of citizenship
- Welcomed as a positive development in Ireland
- Mandatory final step in naturalisation process
- Applicants must make declaration of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State
- Information booklet provided to applicants on right to vote, applying for passport, etc.



- Overall decrease in people acquiring Irish citizenship, though EU nationals increasing in recent years
- Comparatively favourable conditions for naturalisation in Ireland than in other EU Member States
- Nevertheless, applicants face a number of challenges in applying for naturalisation, including:
 - Lack of guidance on permitted absences from State
 - Lack of guidance on ‘good character’ requirement
 - Processing times frequently raised as a concern

Thanks for listening!

Further information:

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