



Obtaining Maltese Citizenship

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MALTESE CITIZENSHIP BY NATURALISATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES BY DIRECT INVESTMENT

By virtue of new rules introduced in 2020, individuals and family dependents may acquire Maltese citizenship, and by extension a Maltese Passport, by making a direct investment in the country, which investment is always subject to a very strict due diligence process, including but not limited to very meticulous background checks of the individual applicants.

The number of certificates by Maltese Citizenship by Naturalisation for Exceptional Services by Direct Investment granted, excluding dependents, has been currently capped at 1,500.

◀ Eligibility criteria

There are three main steps one must satisfy before being granted Maltese citizenship under these regulations:

◀ **Application for Maltese residency** – one of the requirements of these regulations is that an applicant and all adult dependents must hold a Maltese residence card for a minimum of 36 months or by exception for a minimum of 12 months. Applicants who are already in possession of a Maltese residence card will automatically proceed to the next step below. If an application is submitted correctly to the Agency, it takes around 15 working days for the card to be issued.

◀ **Submission for eligibility application** – this should be submitted within 12 or 36 months from the issuance of the residency card, depending on the applicant's choice of residency period. It usually takes 2 working days from receipt of the eligibility application pack until issuance of a formal receipt by the Agency including the payment request voucher.

◀ **Letter of Approval for Eligibility:** once a full and satisfactory pack is submitted, it takes between 120 and 150 calendar days until the letter of approval for eligibility is issued. This letter enables the applicant to submit the citizenship application in one or three years' time.

◀ **Submission of application for Maltese Citizenship by Naturalisation for Exceptional Services by Direct Investment (ESDI)** – as mentioned above, applicants may opt to obtain citizenship either after 36 months or after 12 months. In each case, submissions should be made after the expiration of the respective residency periods.

The direct investment referred to above consists of the following:

- **A Government Contribution:** The applicant has the obligation to pay a contribution to the Maltese Government, before being granted Maltese citizenship, which can vary as follows:
 - Procedure 1: If applying after 36 months of residency in Malta, a contribution of €600,000 is due for the Main Applicant and €50,000 for every additional dependent.
 - Procedure 2: If applying after 12 months of residency in Malta, a contribution of €750,000 is due for the Main Applicant and €50,000 for every additional dependent.
- **A Property Investment:** Refer to note on immovable property below
- **A Donation:** The applicant is obliged to give a donation of €10,000 (minimum), prior to the issuance of the certificate of citizenship to a registered philanthropic, cultural, sport, scientific, animal welfare or artistic non governmental organisation or society.

Apart from the above-listed qualifying investment criteria, applicants are required to pay due diligence fees to the Government Agency processing the applications, as follows:

Fees and Investments			
Residence	Admin Fees	Card Fee	Investment*
Applicant	€5,000	€27.50	€10,000
Dependent	€1,000	€27.50	

Eligibility	Admin Fees	Due Diligence	Investment**
Applicant	€1,000	€15,000	€10,000
Dependent	€1,000	€10,000	
Benefactor		€15,000	

Citizenship	Admin Fees	Investment less than 3 years of residence in Malta	Investment more than 3 years of residence in Malta
Applicant	€500	€740,000	€590,000
Dependent	€500	€50,000	€50,000

* Part payment of non-refundable deposit

** Non-refundable deposit of the investment re: donation to a registered philanthropic, cultural, sport, scientific, animal welfare or artistic non-governmental organisation or society, or as otherwise approved by the Agency.

➤ Minimum stay requirements in Malta

Being granted with Maltese Citizenship entitles the applicant and the registered dependents the right to reside, settle and stay indefinitely in Malta. Applicants under this programme have no minimum stay requirements in Malta.

➤ Family members and dependents

The qualifying dependents consist of:

- the spouse in a monogamous marriage. Life partners, including a civil union, domestic partnership, common law marriage also qualify. The term "spouse" in these regulations is to be understood as being gender neutral.
- children of the main applicant or of his dependent, including adopted children, who are under 18 years of age at the time of submission of application.
- children of the main applicant or of his dependent, including adopted children, who have turned 18 but have not yet turned 29, at the time of submission of application. These children should be able to prove that they are not married and that they are financially dependent on the main applicant.
- children of the main applicant or of his dependent, including adopted children, who at the time of submission of application have turned 18, and are qualified as persons with a disability.

- parents or grandparents of the main applicant or of his dependent over the age of 55, at the time of submission of application, who are not married and who can prove that they are financially dependent on the main applicant.

➤ Taxation

Depending on the length of stay in Malta, such individuals are for Maltese income tax purposes considered to be individuals who are resident but not domiciled in Malta. Such individuals are taxed in Malta on income and gains arising in Malta and on income arising outside Malta which is received in Malta.

We suggest that you request and obtain a separate tax advice to ensure that you are always in compliance with the relevant Maltese income tax legislation. ACT is in a position to advise and assist in this regard.

➤ Processing time

Keeping in mind the time-frames mentioned above, upon receiving a full and complete application pack, the Agency usually takes between 10 to 12 months to issue the letter of approval in principle. The Agency reserves the right to stop its reviewing process at any point in time, should it deem necessary to ask for further clarifications and/or documentation from the applicant. The time it takes the applicant to get back with the required information is key to the swift continuation of the reviewing process from the Agency.

➤ Ongoing obligations

Annually, all applicants need to file an annual declaration to the Agency, through their Accredited Agent. This declaration would confirm compliance with the set requirements for Maltese citizenship under this particular programme.

This obligation stands for the first 5 years from the date of the oath of allegiance.

➤ Immovable property

The applicant may either buy an immovable property in Malta with a minimum value of €700,000. Alternatively, he may lease one for a minimum annual rent of €16,000. In both cases, the immovable property needs to be retained for at least five years from the date of issuance of the certificate of citizenship.



CITIZENSHIP BY REGISTRATION

Maltese generations born abroad have been able to acquire Maltese Citizenship by registration for years. However, thanks to amendments made back in 2007 to the then existing Maltese Citizenship Act, it is now possible for second as well as subsequent Maltese generations born abroad to apply for and eventually be granted Maltese citizenship.

➤ Eligibility criteria

The following persons may apply for Maltese Citizenship by registration:

- spouses and/or widows/widowers who were married to a Maltese citizen.
- sons or daughters born of a female born in Malta or who acquired Maltese citizenship by birth in Malta.
- former citizens of Malta who do not qualify automatically for dual citizenship because they have not resided for a minimum of 6 years abroad.
- former citizens of Malta who were formerly citizens of Malta by Registration or by Naturalisation.
- descendants in the direct line of an ascendant born in Malta of a parent likewise born in Malta.

All the above options are considered on a case by case basis. More information regarding every option mentioned may be discussed in person or over online meetings, in order to ensure a smooth and timely process.

If an applicant was born abroad, the Agency will inform the Director of Public Registry about the granting of Maltese citizenship so that the birth certificate may be registered at the Public Registry Office.

The full name of all those persons who were naturalised as citizens of Malta during the preceding year is published in the Government Gazette on an annual basis.

➤ Minimum stay requirements in Malta

Maltese Citizenship entitles the applicant and the registered dependents the right to reside, settle and stay indefinitely in Malta. Applicants under this programme have no minimum stay requirements in Malta.

➤ Family members and dependents

Upon the granting of Maltese citizenship to a foreign national,

the spouse may also be eligible to apply for Maltese citizenship if married to the said Maltese citizen for over five years. Children of the person granted Maltese citizenship may only apply for their own Maltese citizenship status upon reaching the age of 18.

➤ Taxation

Depending on the length of stay in Malta, such individuals are for Maltese income tax purposes considered to be individuals who are resident but not domiciled in Malta. Such individuals are taxed in Malta on income and gains arising in Malta and on income arising outside Malta which is received in Malta.

We suggest that you request and obtain a separate tax advice to ensure that you are always in compliance with the relevant Maltese income tax legislation. ACT is in a position to advise and assist in this regard.

➤ Processing time and cost of application

The Agency processes the application and successful applicants will be granted Maltese citizenship. They will be considered citizens of Malta from the date printed on their certificate of registration.

From the date of submission of the application and supporting documentation, it usually takes between 4-6 months for the certificate of naturalisation to be issued. Following this, one must then allow another month for the birth and/or marriage certificates to be duly registered in Malta and for the Maltese ID card and passport applications to go through.

The fees payable to the Government Agency in charge of such applications are as follows:

- €150 – application fee, payable on the day of submission
- If the application is acceded to, a further €50 has to be paid upon collection of certificate at the end of the process.

Other Fees (if applicable):

- Additional €15 on first re-registration
- Additional €20 on second re-registration
- Additional €25 on third re-registration
- Additional €10 (each) if Oath of Allegiance is sworn at the offices of Community Malta Agency in front of a person duly authorised to act as a Commissioner for Oaths
- Additional €10 (each) if declaration is affirmed at the offices of Community Malta Agency in front of a person duly authorised to act as a Commissioner for Oaths.

➤ Ongoing obligations

There are no ongoing obligations which need to be followed by Maltese citizens who acquire Citizenship by Registration.

➤ Immovable property

There are no minimum threshold requirements with respect to the acquisition or rental of a residential immovable property.



CITIZENSHIP BY NATURALISATION

Naturalisation is the legal process by which a non-citizen of a country may acquire citizenship of that country. In Malta, it is the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188) which governs the process to obtain Citizenship by Naturalisation.

➤ Eligibility criteria

The following persons may apply for Maltese Citizenship by naturalisation.

Foreign citizens who:

- Are over 18 years of age.
- Have resided in Malta for 12 consecutive months, immediately preceding the submission of application and have resided in Malta for a minimum of 4 years in total, during the 6 years preceding the afore-mentioned period of 12 months.
- Have a good knowledge of Maltese or English.

➤ Minimum stay requirements in Malta

Maltese Citizenship entitles the applicant and the registered dependents the right to reside, settle and stay indefinitely in Malta. Applicants under this programme have no minimum stay requirements in Malta.

➤ Family members and dependents

The parent or parents, who were non-Maltese at the time of their child's birth and one or both later acquired Maltese citizenship, may submit an application on behalf of their children to be naturalized as citizens of Malta.

➤ Taxation

Depending on the length of stay in Malta, such individuals are for Maltese income tax purposes considered to be individuals who are resident but not domiciled in Malta. Such individuals are taxed in Malta on income and gains arising in Malta and on income arising outside Malta which is received in Malta.

We suggest that you request and obtain a separate tax advice to ensure that you are always in compliance with the relevant Maltese income tax legislation. ACT is in a position to advise and assist in this regard.

➤ Processing time and cost of application

The process to submit an application is as follows:

- The required documentation is submitted in person to the Agency.

- Upon the completion of the document's review, the applicant signs the duly completed application form.
- The Agency will administer all the oaths, including the Oath of Allegiance to the Republic of Malta.
- Applicable fees, payable to the Agency are to be made on the day of submission via card or cheque. Cash payment is not accepted.

The Agency processes the application and successful applicants will be granted Maltese citizenship. They will be considered citizens of Malta from the date printed on their certificate.

If an applicant was born abroad, the Agency will inform the Director of Public Registry about the granting of Maltese citizenship so that the birth certificate may be registered at the Public Registry Office.

A fee of EUR 450 is payable to the Agency upon submission. Should the citizenship be granted, a further EUR 50 is paid to the Agency once the citizenship certificate is collected.

The full name of all those persons who were naturalised as citizens of Malta during the preceding year is published in the Government Gazette on an annual basis.

From the date of submission of the application and supporting documentation, it usually takes between four to six months for the certificate of naturalisation to be issued. Following this, one must then allow another month for the birth and/or marriage certificates to be duly registered in Malta and for the Maltese ID card and passport applications to go through.

➤ Ongoing obligations

There are no ongoing obligations which need to be followed by Maltese citizens who acquire Citizenship by Naturalisation.

➤ Immovable property

There are no minimum threshold requirements with respect to the acquisition or rental of a residential immovable property.

About ACT

ACT is a multi-disciplinary firm, providing a number of professional services including advice and assistance to private individuals to take up residence in Malta and / or acquire Maltese Citizenship. ACT is an Accredited Agent (AA) with Agenzija Komunita' Malta, the Government Agency processing applications for Maltese Citizenship. ACT is also an Authorised Registered Mandatory (ARM) and therefore authorised to assist private individuals in submitting their applications to the Maltese authorities for them to take up residence in Malta. These accreditations thus authorise ACT to offer citizenship and residency-related services to those private individuals in search of a Maltese agent through whom to submit the relevant applications. Applications must be submitted through an authorised agent.

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