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# THE GLOBALCIT GLOSSARY

ON CITIZENSHIP AND  
ELECTORAL RIGHTS





This GLOBALCIT glossary provides definitions and explanations of frequently used technical terms. It is not an inventory of terms as they are used in the different citizenship laws, since these frequently employ different terms for identical substantive rules. Instead, we attempt to introduce a standardised and coherent terminology that makes it possible to compare legal rules across countries.

The GLOBALCIT glossary covers two themes: the acquisition and loss of citizenship status, and the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in democratic elections.

In GLOBALCIT research we use the term ‘citizenship’ for referring to the legal status and relation between an individual and a state that entails specific legal rights and duties. In this sense, we use citizenship as a synonym for ‘nationality’ in the meaning that it has in international law (see the entries on ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’).

The definitions in this glossary do not always reflect the uses of technical terms in the GLOBALCIT databases and publications. GLOBALCIT authors are encouraged but not strictly required to use the terminology and definitions proposed in this glossary. For other uses specific to our databases and indicators please consult the respective explanatory notes.

We hope that this glossary will be useful beyond the specific purposes of GLOBALCIT by helping to overcome some of the terminological confusions that are widespread in the comparative study of citizenship law.



### Achievement-based acquisition of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship after birth based on special achievements (in sports, science, the arts, etc.).

Can be based on achievements in the past or expected achievements in the future.

See generally: naturalisation.

### Acquisition of citizenship

Becoming a citizen, whether by birth or at any time after birth, whether by automatic attribution, by individual declaration, registration, option or application, or by non-automatic attribution by public authorities.

Contrasting with: loss of citizenship.

### Acquisition of citizenship after birth

Acquisition of citizenship that does not take place

- automatically and immediately at birth; or
- soon after birth by declaration, registration, making use of an option or similar action, on the basis of conditions for the acquisition that were met already at the time of birth.

Note that GLOBALCIT classifies certain regulations as modes of acquisition after birth even though the persons concerned acquire citizenship retrospectively, i.e. are treated as if they had been nationals since birth (or some other point in time in the past).

To be distinguished from: acquisition at birth.

### Acquisition of citizenship at birth

Acquisition of citizenship that either occurs automatically (*ex lege*) and immediately at birth; or can occur immediately after birth by declaration, registration, making use of an option or similar action because all the conditions for acquisition had already been met at the time of birth. Note that certain regulations can be classified under both acquisition at birth and acquisition after birth, depending on whether the person already meets the conditions at birth or only some time after (e.g. the rule that a child born in Belgium can acquire citizenship by declaration within twelve years after birth if both parents have been resident for at least ten years).

To be distinguished from: acquisition after birth.

### Acquisition of citizenship by adoption

Automatic acquisition of citizenship as a result of the adoption of the person concerned

by a reference person who is a national of the country under consideration.

To be distinguished from: adoption as a reason for facilitated non-automatic acquisition (e.g. facilitated naturalisation or registration).

### Acquisition of citizenship by application

Acquisition of citizenship that requires an application by the person or his or her legal representative that initiates a procedure during which the public authorities have to assess criteria for granting citizenship. This does not cover acquisition by declaration or option.

Contrasting with: automatic acquisition of citizenship.

### Acquisition of citizenship by conferment

Used in some countries for certain modes of acquisition of citizenship characterised by:

- non-automatic acquisition; and
- requiring not only an expression of intent by the person or his or her legal representative, but also an act by the responsible public authority.

Synonymous with: grant of citizenship.

### Acquisition of citizenship by declaration

Acquisition of citizenship

by declaration is generally characterised by:

- facilitated procedure and conditions;
- voluntary (in contrast to automatic) acquisition; and/or
- the need for an oral or written declaration (by the person or by his/her legal representative) addressed to the relevant public authorities.

In some countries, declaration is regarded as a unilateral act by the person concerned with immediate effect (unlike acquisition based on a decision by the authorities).

Related to: option, registration.

### Acquisition of citizenship by descent

See main entry: *ius sanguinis*.

### Acquisition of citizenship by legitimation

Automatic acquisition of citizenship by a child born out of wedlock based on legitimation (i.e. legal recognition of paternity) by a father who is a citizen of the country under consideration.

To be distinguished from: legitimation for the purpose of facilitated non-automatic acquisition (e.g. facilitated naturalisation or registration).

### Acquisition/retaining of citizenship by option

Acquisition of citizenship by option is characterised by

- a facilitated procedure and (substantially) facilitated conditions;
- voluntary (in contrast to automatic) acquisition; and, in some countries by
- a unilateral act of the person making use of the option (unlike acquisition based on a decision by the authorities)
- the need for the person or his or her legal representative to choose one of two (or more) alternative nationalities that the person could acquire at birth or wishes to retain after birth.

Related terms: acquisition by declaration, registration.  
 Contrasting with: acquisition by application.

### Acquisition of citizenship otherwise than by descent

Citizenship gained by naturalisation or *ius soli*, as distinct from citizenship by *ius sanguinis*.  
 Contrasting with: *ius sanguinis*.

### Acquisition of citizenship by registration

Acquisition of citizenship that comes into effect through an act of registration with the public authorities by the person or his or her legal representative. It is characterised by:

- a facilitated procedure and (substantially) facilitated conditions;
- voluntary (in contrast to

- automatic) acquisition; and
- a unilateral act by the person making use of the option (unlike acquisition based on a decision by the authorities).

Related terms: declaration, option.

### Active registration

Voter registration system in which eligible voters are not registered automatically but need to apply to be registered in the electoral roll.  
 Contrasting with: automatic registration.

### Active voting rights

See main entry: voting rights.

### Annulment of citizenship

See main entry: nullification of acquisition of citizenship.

### Assimilated representation (of non-resident voters)

A system of representation of non-resident voters that merges their votes with those cast in domestic electoral constituencies and does not represent the former through reserved seats.

Contrasting with: special representation.

### Attribution of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship without involving the consent or an expression of will by the person concerned, including automatic acquisition at birth or after birth and non-automatic acquisition

based on a decision by public authorities.

To be distinguished from: acquisition of citizenship by option, registration, declaration or application.

### Automatic acquisition of citizenship

Ex lege acquisition of citizenship, i.e. acquisition of citizenship by an act of law that does not require some form of expression of intent by the person concerned or his or her legal representative in order to acquire citizenship.

To be distinguished from: acquisition of citizenship by application, declaration, registration, option. Contrasting with: automatic loss of citizenship (lapse).

### Automatic loss of citizenship

Ex lege loss of citizenship, i.e. by an act of law that requires neither explicit expression of intent (application, declaration, making use of an option or similar modalities) by the person or his or her legal representative to renounce citizenship, nor a decision by a public authority.

Synonymous with: lapse of citizenship.

To be distinguished from: non-automatic loss of citizenship, renunciation of citizenship, withdrawal of citizenship.

### Automatic registration

Voter registration system in which eligible voters are automatically registered in the electoral register without having to apply. Contrasting with: active registration.



### Birthright citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship that depends only on facts at the time of the person's birth, in particular the country of birth and/or the citizenship and/or residence status of one or both of the parents or ancestors.

Note: in some countries where *ius soli* predominates, "birthright citizenship" is understood to refer only to citizenship derived from birth in the territory (*ius soli*). See also: *ius sanguinis*, *ius soli*. To be distinguished from: naturalisation.



### **Candidacy rights**

The right to stand as a candidate (or simply, “the right to stand”) in an election.

Synonymous with: passive voting rights.

Contrasting with: active voting rights.

### **Citizenship**

A legal status and relation between an individual and a state or other territorial polity (such as the European Union, a federal province, or only partially recognised states) that entails specific legal rights and duties.

Citizenship of a state is generally used as a synonym for nationality (see: nationality). Where

citizenship is used in a meaning that is different from nationality it refers to the legal rights and duties of individuals attached to nationality under domestic law.

In some national laws, citizenship has a more specific meaning and refers to rights and duties that can only be exercised by nationals after the age of majority (such as voting rights) or to rights and duties that nationals can only exercise in the national territory. Except where

specifically stated, we do not use broader non-legal interpretations of citizenship, which refer to identities, practices and virtues of individuals and organisations oriented towards the common good or to membership and activities of individuals in organisations and civil society associations. See also: nationality.

### **Citizenship ceremony**

Meeting organised by public authorities where newly naturalised persons are individually or collectively welcomed as new citizens of a state, which may include a sworn oath or pledge of loyalty.

### **Citizenship interview**

An administrative procedure in which an official conducts an oral interview with persons applying for citizenship.

### **Citizenship law**

Law regulating the acquisition and loss of the legal status of citizenship. Synonymous with: nationality law. See generally: citizenship.

### **Citizenship requirements**

Legal requirements pertaining to the acquisition and loss of citizenship. This refers to birthright acquisition requirements, naturalisation requirements and conditions for voluntary or involuntary loss of citizenship.

### **Citizenship test**

A standardised oral or written exam that tests the knowledge of naturalisation applicants in any of the following areas: official or dominant languages, history, constitution, political institutions, public values, behavioural norms in civil society, or other characteristics aspects of the country of naturalisation.

See generally: citizenship requirements.

### **Compulsory voting**

See main entry: mandatory voting.

### **Consular protection**

The right of a citizen to receive protection from the diplomatic or consular authorities of a state. Traditionally, consular protection is provided by the state of which the person is a citizen, but this may also be another state with which the person has a privileged relation (e.g. another EU Member State for citizens of the European Union in third countries).

To be distinguished from: diplomatic protection.

### **Consular services**

Services provided by a sending state (including consular protection) involving the exercise of official functions, also electronically (e-government), in accordance with international agreements and practice, and

the laws of the receiving state, in particular: issuing travel documents, acting as notary and civil registrar and in capacities of a similar kind, performing certain functions of an administrative nature, transmitting judicial and extrajudicial documents, executing rogatory letters or commissions to take evidence for the courts of the sending state, establishing a polling station or providing assistance for voting in elections of the sending state.

See generally: consular protection.

### **Cultural affinity-based acquisition of citizenship**

Acquisition of citizenship after birth on the basis of a particular cultural background, e.g. for persons of a particular ethnicity, mother tongue or colloquial language and/or religious affiliation. We include in this category also acquisition of citizenship based on presumed racial affinity.

To be distinguished from: nationality-of-origin-specific acquisition of citizenship.

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## Deprivation of citizenship

See main entry: revocation of citizenship.

Synonymous with:  
denationalisation.

Contrasting with: renunciation of citizenship.

## Denationalisation

See main entry: revocation of citizenship.

To be distinguished from:  
denaturalisation.

Contrasting with: renunciation of citizenship.

## Denaturalisation

Involuntary loss of citizenship acquired through naturalisation whether automatic or non-automatic (including lapse, withdrawal, nullification).

See generally: denationalisation.

## Denizenship

A quasi-citizenship status and set of rights for long-term resident foreign nationals that includes at least the following: long-term residence permit free access to employment, enhanced protection from deportation/expulsion (compared to short-term residents) provisions for family reunification in the country of residence. In several (mostly European and South American) states, denizens enjoy additional rights, such as voting and candidacy rights in local elections.

See generally: quasi-citizenship.

## Diplomatic protection

Is exercised by a state against another state in order to protect the rights or interests of a citizen that have been injured by that other state.

To be distinguished from: consular protection.

## Direct election

Election of a president, provincial governor, or mayor by citizens of the respective territorial polity.

Contrasting with: indirect election.

## Discretionary naturalisation

Acquisition of citizenship following a decision by public authorities that is not based on an individual entitlement of the person concerned. The person may, but need not, be granted citizenship if the conditions specified in the law have been met.

To be distinguished from:  
entitlement to acquire citizenship.

## Domestic ius sanguinis

Ius sanguinis for persons born on the territory of the country under consideration. Some countries limit the principle of jus sanguinis by

imposing additional conditions for extraterritorial *ius sanguinis* (such as domestic birth of the parent transmitting citizenship to the child born abroad) that do not apply to domestic *ius sanguinis*.

Contrasting with: extraterritorial *ius sanguinis*. See generally: *ius sanguinis*.

### Dual citizenship

See main entry: multiple citizenship.

### Dual nationality

See main entry: multiple citizenship.



### Effective nationality/genuine link

A principle used primarily in private international law in cases of conflicting rights and duties of multiple citizens in order to determine the state whose law ought to prevail. In its 1955 *Nottebohm* judgment the International Court of Justice extended the principle to cover also cases of singular nationality and alleged abusive acquisition of another country's nationality

in order to avoid duties towards a state of current residence or to benefit from diplomatic protection against that state.

### Electoral rights

Include the right to cast a vote (active voting rights) and the right to stand as a candidate (candidacy rights).

### Entitlement to acquire citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship based on a decision by the public authorities that must be granted by them if and when the relevant conditions specified by the law have been met. Whether or not the acquisition is based on a legal entitlement depends primarily on the mode of the authorities' final decision, not on the actual contents or clarity of the conditions themselves. The conditions themselves may leave some room for discretion by the authorities (e.g. stable income, good character) but, if the authorities come to the conclusion that the conditions specified by law are met, they have to grant citizenship to the person. To be distinguished from: discretionary naturalisation.

### EU citizens

Individuals who are nationals of any of the Member States of the European Union (EU).

## EU citizenship

The legal status and rights of EU citizens, as defined in Articles 18, 20 and 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Directive 2004/38/EC (commonly termed the Citizenship or Free Movement Directive).

These include the rights to:

- non-discrimination on the basis of (EU) nationality.
- move and reside freely within the EU.
- vote for and stand as a candidate in European Parliament and municipal elections.
- consular protection (help from the embassy or consulate of any other EU country to EU citizens in distress in a country outside the EU where they have no embassy or consulate of their own country).
- petition the European Parliament and complain to the European ombudsman.
- contact and receive a response from any EU institution in one of the EU's official languages.
- access European Parliament, European Commission and Council documents under certain conditions.

## Ex lege acquisition or loss of citizenship

See main entries: automatic acquisition of citizenship, automatic loss of citizenship.

Related term: lapse of citizenship.

## Extension of acquisition of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship after birth (with or without consent) that is conditional upon or results automatically from the simultaneous acquisition of citizenship by a reference person. To be distinguished from: transfer of citizenship (from a reference person who has already previously been a citizen to the person newly acquiring citizenship).

## External citizens

Citizens of the country under consideration who are abroad whether on a short-term or long-term basis, including those who have acquired their citizenship by extraterritorial *ius sanguinis* and have never resided in their country of citizenship.

To be distinguished from: non-resident citizens.

See generally: external citizenship.

## External citizenship

A set of rights and duties that citizens enjoy in relation to their country of citizenship when being outside its territory. External citizenship includes the rights of temporary absentees (such as those to consular and diplomatic protection and return) as well as rights of non-resident citizens (such as non-residents' voting rights in national elections).

See also: external citizens, non-resident citizens, extraterritorial quasi-citizenship.

### External voting rights

The right to cast a vote while not being present in the country where the election is held by any means that do not require physical presence, including postal ballots, voting in embassies, consulates or special polling stations abroad, electronic voting and proxy voting. To be distinguished from: non-resident citizens' voting rights. Synonymous with: out-of country voting, voting from abroad.

### Extraterritorial *ius sanguinis*

*Ius sanguinis* for persons born to citizen parents outside the territory of the country. See generally: *ius sanguinis*.

### Extraterritorial naturalisation

Acquisition of citizenship after birth where residence requirements are fully waived, independently of whether the naturalisation procedure requires at some point presence in the territory. See generally: naturalisation. Contrasting with: residence-based naturalisation.

### Extraterritorial quasi-citizenship

A set of rights granted to non-resident non-citizens that approximates the rights of non-resident citizens. Extraterritorial

quasi-citizenship always includes rights of entry to the territory and residence there and thus can be converted into domestic quasi-citizenship (denizenship) by taking up residence. Extraterritorial quasi-citizenship rarely includes rights to consular protection (it does so for EU citizens residing in third countries where their member state is not represented), and, as far as we know, never includes voting rights. The most common categories who are granted extraterritorial quasi-citizenship are former citizens and their descendants, nationals of a former colony, nationals of other member states in a regional union of states (such as the EU or the Nordic Union), nationals of specific other countries on grounds of reciprocity, or foreign nationals who are seen to share a cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious affinity with the population of the country concerned.

See also: cultural affinity-based acquisition. To be distinguished from: denizenship.

See generally: quasi-citizenship.



### **Facilitated naturalisation**

Acquisition of citizenship after birth for which residence requirements and/or other conditions for residence-based naturalisation are reduced or waived.

See generally: naturalisation.  
Contrasting with: residence-based naturalisation.

### **Filial extension of acquisition of citizenship (extension of acquisition of citizenship to child)**

Acquisition of citizenship after birth (with or without consent) that is conditional upon or results automatically from the simultaneous acquisition of citizenship by the person's parent(s).

To be distinguished from: filial transfer of citizenship and *ius sanguinis* after birth.

See generally: extension of acquisition of citizenship.

### **Filial transfer of citizenship (transfer of citizenship to child)**

Acquisition of citizenship after birth based on the fact that the

person is a (natural, adopted or foster) child of a reference person who has already previously been a citizen.

To be distinguished from: filial extension of acquisition of citizenship and *ius sanguinis* after birth.

See generally: transfer of citizenship.

### **Foundling**

A child of unknown parentage found abandoned on the territory of a state.

### **Franchise**

See main entry: active voting rights.  
Contrasting with: candidacy rights.

### **Grant of citizenship**

See main entry: conferment of citizenship.



### **High public office**

Any of the following posts: 1. Head of State (where this is not a monarch); 2. Head of Government (e.g. prime minister); 3. Minister in the executive branch of

government; 4. High ranking civil servant in the executive branch of Government (e.g. head of a ministerial department); 5. High ranking judicial offices (e.g. judge, public prosecutor in a high court; and 6. High ranking officer in the national army (e.g. general/ marshal).

after birth that depends on an investment or another form of financial contribution in the country under consideration by the person concerned.

### **Involuntary loss of citizenship**

See main entry: revocation of citizenship.

### **Ius sanguinis**

The determination of a person's citizenship on the basis of the citizenship of his or her parents (or one parent or one particular parent) or ancestor(s) in direct line at the time of the person's birth or at the time of acquisition of citizenship by the person (the two points in time are different in cases of acquisition after birth). Ancestry-based *ius sanguinis* may, e.g. provide for the extraterritorial acquisition of citizenship after birth if an emigrant grandparent had never renounced his or her citizenship of origin. GLOBALCIT uses the term *ius sanguinis* in a broad way that covers not only automatic acquisition at birth, but also non-automatic acquisition at birth and after birth. *Ius sanguinis* generally applies to legal parenthood (in cases where legal parenthood differs from biological parenthood). We distinguish between territorial *ius sanguinis* in the country and extraterritorial *ius sanguinis* for children born abroad.

### **In-country voting**

The exercise of voting rights from within the territory of the relevant state in which an election is being held, independently of whether the voter has residence in the country. To be distinguished from: external voting, out-of-country voting, voting from abroad.

### **Indirect election**

Election of a president, provincial governor, or mayor by the members of an elected assembly (national or regional parliament, local council). Contrasting with: direct election of such office holders by citizens.

### **Investor citizenship**

Acquisition of citizenship

Contrasting with: *ius soli*.  
See generally: birthright citizenship.

### **Ius sanguinis after birth**

Acquisition after birth which is dependent on the fact that one or both of the person's parents already held citizenship of the country under consideration at the time of the person's birth and/or still holds that citizenship at the time of acquisition by the person concerned.

To be distinguished from: filial transfer of citizenship and filial extension of acquisition of citizenship.

See generally: *ius sanguinis*.

### **Ius soli**

The determination of a person's citizenship on the basis of birth in the relevant country where this rule applies. This concept is used in a broad way that covers not only automatic acquisition at birth but also non-automatic acquisition at birth and after birth if territorial birth is the main condition for citizenship acquisition.

To be distinguished from: *ius sanguinis*.

### **Lapse of citizenship**

See main entry: automatic loss of citizenship.

Synonymous with: *ex lege* loss of citizenship.



### **Legal representative**

A person legally empowered to act on behalf of the person acquiring or losing citizenship, e.g. the parent of a minor child.

### **Loss of citizenship**

Loss of the status as citizen of a country (voluntarily or involuntarily, automatically or by an act of the public authorities).

The main types of loss are renunciation by the person concerned and revocation of citizenship by the law or by a decision of public authorities. Revocation includes withdrawal and lapse (i.e. automatic loss *ex lege*).

Contrasting with: acquisition of citizenship.



### **Mandatory voting**

A legal duty to cast a vote in elections, independently of whether there is a sanction for non-compliance with this duty. Synonymous with: compulsory voting.

### **Mode of acquisition or loss of citizenship**

A manner of acquiring or losing citizenship based on a broad and distinct legal rule. GLOBALCIT compares national citizenship laws based on a typology of modes of acquisition and loss.

### **Multiple citizenship**

Legal status of citizenship held by a person simultaneously in two (dual citizenship) or more states. Multiple citizenship may be acquired at birth or after birth and with or without the knowledge and consent of all the states involved. The term 'multiple citizenship' refers only to the legal status of citizenship a person holds in several states and does not specify the person's rights and obligations vis-à-vis the state of second or third

citizenship where the person does not currently reside. (Some states distinguish between citizenship that can only be held by residents of the state and nationality that may also be held by expatriates.) Synonymous with: multiple (dual) nationality.



### **Nationality**

Legal relationship between a person and a state (country) as recognised in international law. The terms nationality and citizenship refer generally to the same status and are thus frequently used as synonyms. GLOBALCIT prefers to use the term citizenship when referring to the internal legal relation between an individual and a state, and the term nationality when referring to international relations between states and to the relation of states to the citizens of other states. We do not cover nationality in a non-legal sense, i.e. membership in a nation sharing a common history, culture, language or descent (which does not necessarily coincide with the totality of persons holding the nationality of a country in the legal sense defined above),

or with nationality as referring to membership of a national minority living within a state and/or culturally linked to an external kin-state.

See also: citizenship.

### Nationality law

See main entry: citizenship law.

### Nationality-of-origin-based acquisition of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship that is specific to persons who are citizens of a particular other country or group of countries. Examples are facilitated naturalisation of EU citizens in some EU Member states and of Nordic citizens in all Nordic states.

To be distinguished from: cultural affinity-based acquisition of citizenship

### Naturalisation

GLOBALCIT categorises as naturalisation all modes of acquisition after birth other than those for which birth in the territory or to citizen parents is a condition. In a narrower sense, naturalisation is sometimes used to indicate the specific procedure through which citizenship can be acquired, which requires an application by this person or his or her legal representative as well as an act of granting citizenship by a public authority. In this second

sense, a naturalisation procedure differs from declaration or option procedures that may provide a facilitated and/or less discretionary acquisition.

Contrasting with: birthright citizenship, *ius sanguinis*, *ius soli*  
See also: acquisition of citizenship after birth.

### Naturalisation rate

Naturalisation rates aim to measure the demographic transition rates between the categories of non-citizen residents and resident citizens. They are generally calculated as the ratio between the number of persons who acquired the citizenship of a country during a calendar year by naturalisation and the stock of foreign residents in the same country at the beginning of the year. When so defined, the denominator of the naturalisation rate includes persons who are not eligible for naturalisation because they do not meet residence and other requirements. Naturalisation rates therefore do not indicate either the propensity of naturalisation among eligible immigrants, nor do they indicate how open a country is for naturalisation of immigration cohorts who meet the residence requirement. Cumulative naturalisation rates measure the cumulative rate of non-citizen residents who naturalise after having resided in the country for a

particular number of years.  
See also: naturalisation, non-citizen residents, resident citizens.

### **Naturalisation requirements**

Legal conditions or requirements for the acquisition of citizenship by naturalisation.

See also: naturalisation.

### **Non-automatic acquisition of citizenship**

Acquisition of citizenship that requires an act by a public authority and/or some form of expression of intent (application, declaration, registration, or making use of an option) by the person or his or her legal representative.

Contrasting with: automatic acquisition of citizenship.

### **Non-automatic loss of citizenship**

Loss of citizenship that requires either that a public authority initiates a procedure to withdraw citizenship (rather than just issuing an official notice that citizenship has been lost *ex lege*) or some form of explicit expression of intent to renounce citizenship (application, declaration, registration, or making use of an option) by the person or his or her legal representative.

To be distinguished from: automatic loss of citizenship, (*ex lege* loss of citizenship, lapse of citizenship). Related terms: renunciation of citizenship, withdrawal of citizenship.

See generally: revocation of citizenship.

### **Non-citizen residents**

Persons with residence in the territory of a state of which they are not a citizen. Non-citizen residents do not include temporary visitors and persons in transit who do not take up residence. Non-citizens without a valid residence permit may be included if their *de facto* residence is otherwise registered or recognised by public authorities. Contrasting with: resident citizens, non-resident citizens.

### **Non-citizens' voting/candidacy rights**

The rights of non-citizens to vote or stand as candidates in elections. As far as we know, such rights are never granted to non-resident non-citizens. Non-citizens' electoral rights may depend only on residence (in local elections in many European and South American countries) or also on the foreign nationality of the person. Nationality-of-origin-based electoral rights for non-citizens may be granted on a basis of reciprocity, of special historical relations between the countries involved, or shared membership in a regional union (such as the European Union where EU citizens enjoy local voting rights when residing in other Member States). To be distinguished from:

residence-based electoral rights.  
Contrasting with: non-residents' voting/candidacy rights.

### **Non-national EU citizen**

A citizen of a Member State of the EU in relation to another Member State; also called second country national (SCN). Mostly referring to EU citizens residing in another Member State and who are sometimes also called 'mobile EU citizens'.

Contrasting with: third country national.

See generally: EU citizen.

### **Non-resident citizens**

Citizens without residence in their country of citizenship, independently of whether they are present in the country at a relevant point in time (such as an election) or abroad.

To be distinguished from: external citizens.

Contrasting with: resident citizens, non-citizen residents.

### **Non-residents' voting/ candidacy rights**

The right of persons without residence in the country where the election is held to cast a vote or to stand as a candidate. In all empirical cases that we are aware of these rights can only be exercised by citizens of the country.

(They cannot be exercised by extraterritorial quasi-citizens.)  
To be distinguished from: external voting rights (voting from abroad) for external citizens who may or may not have residence in the country.

Contrasting with: non-citizens' voting/candidacy rights.

### **Nullification of acquisition of citizenship**

A determination by a public authority that a past acquisition of citizenship is null and void because it is established ex post that conditions required for the acquisition were in fact not met at the time of application or declaration by the person in question or at the time of decision by the responsible authority (whichever is applicable). As a result of this decision, the person is retrospectively deemed never to have been a citizen. Nullification may be a response to fraud by the person concerned, but also to an error committed by the public authority. Nullification can have a retroactive effect (ex tunc) or effect from the time of the decision (ex nunc).

To be distinguished from: withdrawal of citizenship, which presupposes that citizenship has been legally held in the past.

Contrasting with: retrospective acquisition of citizenship.  
See generally: revocation of citizenship.



### Out-of-country voting

See main entry: external voting.  
Synonymous with: voting from abroad.

### Partner extension of acquisition of citizenship (extension to unmarried partner)

Acquisition of citizenship after birth (with or without consent) that is conditional upon or results automatically from the simultaneous acquisition of citizenship by the person's unmarried partner.

To be distinguished from: partner transfer of citizenship.



### Partial citizenship in special territories

Special citizenship statuses defined in a country's citizenship law for specific groups of persons applied in offshore or other designated territories (e.g. British Overseas or Dependent Territories) and that entail a lack or restriction of core citizenship rights and duties (such as the right to enter the country). To be distinguished from: restricted citizenship (based on mode of acquisition or duration of possession), quasi-citizenship.

### Partner transfer of citizenship (transfer to unmarried partner)

Acquisition of citizenship after birth based on the fact that the person is the unmarried partner of a reference person who is already a citizen.

To be distinguished from: partner extension of acquisition of citizenship.

### Passive voting rights

See main entry: candidacy rights.

### Procedure for acquisition or loss of citizenship

A set of rules regulating the competences and interaction of individuals and public authorities in the acquisition or loss of citizenship, independently of substantive requirements. A main distinction with regard to procedures is whether the acquisition or loss is automatic, i.e. becomes effective by act of law, or non-automatic, i.e. requires an

act by a public authority and/or an expression of will (application, declaration, etc.) by the person or his or her legal representative. Procedures cover also the internal division of competences and tasks between different branches of public authorities (central and decentralised public administrations, courts, legislatures, etc.)

To be distinguished from: naturalisation requirements.

### Public service-based acquisition of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship after birth based on public service for the country, whether military or civil service (e.g. as civil servant, teacher or university professor, or voluntary activities regarded as public service).



### Quasi-citizenship

A legal status and/or set of rights for specific groups of non-citizens that entails special privileges compared to other foreign nationals and that approximates the rights of citizens. We distinguish between

domestic quasi-citizenship for non-citizen residents (denizenship) and extraterritorial quasi-citizenship for non-citizen non-residents.

This distinction is not a sharp one since extraterritorial quasi-citizens mostly enjoy immigration and settlement rights and thus become domestic quasi citizens immediately after entering the country. By contrast, domestic quasi-citizens generally lose rights to return after long-term residence abroad.

See also: denizenship, extraterritorial quasi-citizenship.



### Reacquisition of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship by a person who was previously a citizen. In most cases, naturalisation requirements are relaxed or dropped. Often, the procedure is based on declaration, registration or making use of an option.

See generally: facilitated naturalisation.

## Reference person

Another person to whom the person acquiring or losing citizenship holds a special relationship that serves as grounds for special rules concerning the acquisition or loss of citizenship. Reference persons are mostly close relatives, such as parents, spouses or grandparents.

## Refugee

Person who has been recognised as a refugee and to whom the status of refugee has been conferred by the country under consideration according to the country's asylum law and/or the Geneva Refugee Convention. In a broader sense, refugee may refer to any person who has fled another country, who is now resident in the country under consideration and who has not yet acquired its citizenship. This category includes recognised refugees (see above), persons with the status of de facto-refugees protected by non-refoulement (subsidiary protection), persons enjoying temporary protection and asylum-seekers. See also: (de facto) statelessness.

## Release from citizenship

Loss of citizenship initiated by an application made by the person or his or her legal representative, but requiring the approval of a public authority. Release from citizenship is a special procedure applying to renunciation of citizenship.

See generally: renunciation of citizenship.

## Remote voting

All methods of casting a vote outside the polling station in the electoral constituency where the voter is registered. Remote voting can be exercised inside or outside the territorial polity where the election is held. Remote voting methods include: option to vote in another polling station in the territory, voting by postal ballot inside or outside the territory, proxy voting, e-voting, voting at embassies, consulates or special polling stations abroad. To be distinguished from: external voting.

## Renunciation of citizenship

Loss of citizenship initiated by a declaration or application by the person or his or her legal representative addressed to the relevant authorities expressing his or her intention or desire to give up the citizenship in question. The renunciation procedure can be

- either non-discretionary if it has to be granted or becomes effective automatically once all the legal conditions are met (renunciation by declaration);
- or subject to the approval of a public authority (renunciation by application or release from citizenship).

Contrasting with: revocation of citizenship.

## Residence-based naturalisation

Acquisition of citizenship after birth for which the main condition is a certain period of residence on the territory of the country under consideration.

See also: residence requirements.

## Residence-based voting/candidacy rights

Electoral rights that depend on residence in the country where the election is held but do not depend on possessing a certain citizenship (of the country where the election is held or of a country whose citizens are granted special electoral rights, often on a basis of reciprocity, or of member states in a regional union).

To be distinguished from: non-citizens' voting/candidacy rights. See generally: electoral rights.

## Residence requirements

Conditions (e.g., for the acquisition of citizenship or exercise of electoral rights) that an individual must have resided on the territory of a state under consideration for a certain period of time or during a relevant period of time or must hold a certain type of residence permit.

See also: residence-based naturalisation.

## Resident citizens

Citizens with residence in

their country of citizenship, independently of whether they are present in the territory at a relevant point in time (such as an election) and of whether they are registered as local residents at a particular address. GLOBALCIT generally refers to residence as a legal fact, often documented in civic registries, rather than to residence as a social fact of longer-term presence in a territory and/or a household. Individuals can simultaneously maintain several residences in different countries. Contrasting with: non-resident citizens; non-citizen residents.

## Resident voters/candidates

Individuals who exercise voting or candidacy rights while holding residence within the territory of the state in which an election is held. See generally: resident citizens.

## Restricted citizenship (based on mode of acquisition or duration of possession)

Status of persons who enjoy the same general legal status as other citizens but whose rights and/or duties are restricted because

- they have acquired citizenship via a certain mode (e.g. by naturalisation instead of by birthright); or
- they have so far held this citizenship for only a certain period.

Restricted citizenship can apply both to residents (e.g. when

naturalised citizens are excluded from high public offices) and to non-residents (e.g. when naturalised citizens who have left the country cannot transmit their citizenship by descent to their children born abroad). To be distinguished from: restrictions of electoral and other citizenship rights and exemptions from duties on grounds of criminal convictions, age, mental disability, or for certain professions (e.g. in the army, clergy).

To be distinguished from: partial citizenship status in special territories and from restricted rights of non-resident citizens who recover their full citizenship rights and duties upon taking up residence in the country.

### **Retrospective acquisition of citizenship**

Acquisition of citizenship retrospectively so that the person is treated as if he or she had been a citizen since a particular point in the past (in many cases, since birth) before the determination or granting of citizenship by the authorities.

Contrasting with: nullification of citizenship.

### **Revocation of citizenship**

Any form of involuntary loss of citizenship whether automatic or non-automatic (including lapse, withdrawal, nullification) that is

not initiated by the person or his or her legal representative. Revocation can be either automatic (*ex lege*) or initiated by the responsible public authorities.

Synonymous with: deprivation of citizenship, denationalisation, involuntary loss of citizenship.

Contrasting with: renunciation of citizenship.



### **Second country national (SCN)**

See main entry: non-national EU citizen.

### **Socialisation-based acquisition of citizenship**

Acquisition of citizenship after birth based on socialisation of a person before the age of majority in the country, i.e. acquisition by a person who has resided in the country for a certain period before the age of majority, or who attended school for some time and/or completed school there.

### **Special representation (of non-resident voters)**

A system of representation that

creates special extraterritorial constituencies for non-resident voters and/or reserves special seats for their representatives. Contrasting with: assimilated representation.

### Spousal extension of acquisition of citizenship (extension to spouse)

Acquisition of citizenship after birth (with or without consent) that is conditional upon or results from the simultaneous acquisition of citizenship by the person's (married) spouse.

To be distinguished from: spousal transfer of citizenship.

### Spousal transfer of citizenship (transfer to spouse)

Acquisition of citizenship after birth based on the fact that the person is the (married) spouse of a reference person who is already a citizen of the country under consideration. This includes not just automatic transfers of citizenship by marriage, but also non-automatic acquisition by naturalisation with special (mostly facilitated) conditions for spouses. To be distinguished from: spousal extension of acquisition of citizenship.

### Statelessness

The status of a person who is not considered as a national by any

state under the operation of its law (Art 1(1) Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954). A distinction between de facto and de iure statelessness is discouraged by UNHCR, which notes that determining whether a person is stateless is a 'mixed question of fact and law' (Handbook on the Protection of Stateless Persons, paras 7 and 23). The historical understanding of de facto statelessness was that this term applies to persons outside the country of their nationality who are unable or, for valid reasons, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country (see UNHCR 2010 Prato Conclusions). The term has, however, no agreed definition in international law. In practice it is often used to refer to people who are inside the country of their nationality but cannot obtain official recognition of their nationality. Those who lack documentation of their nationality may be of undetermined nationality, of whom a sub-set facing discrimination of various kinds or lacking the necessary evidence may be at risk of statelessness. At the point where they have exhausted all avenues to obtain official recognition or grant of nationality, they must be considered stateless persons without qualification - whether or not they appear to have entitlement to nationality under the law. See also: undetermined citizenship.



### Third country national (TCN)

Citizen of a state that is not involved in a relevant relation with the state concerned. Most commonly used for nationals of countries that are not Member States of the European Union. Contrasting with: EU citizen.

### Transfer of citizenship

Acquisition of citizenship after birth (with or without consent) that depends on the previous possession – rather than simultaneous acquisition – of citizenship by a reference person. To be distinguished from: extension of citizenship acquisition from a reference person to the person concerned. Related terms: filial transfer of citizenship, spousal transfer of citizenship.



### Undetermined citizenship

The status of persons who are unable to establish their citizenship or who are of unknown citizenship. Contrasting with: statelessness.



### Voluntary acquisition of citizenship

Any acquisition of citizenship which is not automatic (*ex lege*), and requires some expression of intent to acquire citizenship (application, declaration, registration, making use of an option) by the person or his or her legal representative. Voluntary acquisition may occur not only through naturalisation but also at birth, if it depends on a specific action by a legal representative of the person (such as registration of the citizenship of a child born

abroad by the parents).  
Contrasting with: automatic acquisition of citizenship.

### Voting rights

Usually refers to 'active voting rights', i.e., the right to cast a vote in an election. Contrasting with: candidacy rights.

Synonymous with: franchise

See generally: electoral rights.



### Withdrawal of citizenship

The non-automatic loss of citizenship based on a decision by a public authority to deprive the person of his or her citizenship. The mere issuing of an official notice informing the person of the fact that he or she has lost citizenship *ex lege* does not count as a decision by the public authority.

To be distinguished from: lapse of citizenship, renunciation of citizenship.

See generally: revocation of citizenship.



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