

Citizenship as a value

Panel 1: Citizenship in the Greater Region

The (strange) case of Belgium

How do foreigners become Belgian citizens?

	Declaration	Naturalization
Who?	18 y. + / place of birth not relevant	18 y. + / place of birth not relevant
Who decides?	Local municipality / public prosecutor / (local) court	Parliament
How many (2014-2019)?	2014 : 9.000 2015 : 12.000 2016 : 17.000 2017 : 20.000 2018 : 22.000 2019 : 25.000	<i>'Old' style :</i> 2014 : 3.000 2015: 5.000 2016: 3.000 2017: 3.000 2018 : 1.500 2019: 700 <i>'New' style : +/- 100</i>
Requirements?	Residence period + integration + good conduct	'Exceptional achievements'

Declaration : residence period + integration + good conduct

	1st scenario	2 nd scenario	3rd scenario
Who?	Born in Belgium + residence in Belgium since then (until application)	5 years of (legal) residence	10 years of (legal) residence
Integration?	No further requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language (A2 CEFRL)• 'Social integration' : education / work<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Economic integration' : work / education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language (A2 CEFRL)• 'Participation in life of community'
Good conduct?	Criminal record ('serious personal facts')		

Changes and drivers for change?

- Pendulum swing:
 - 2000 : integration is *presumed*
 - 2012 : integration *must be demonstrated* [documentary system]
- Drivers for change? A purely inward looking debate [Parliament + media]
 - No evaluation of previous legislation
 - No comparative benchmarking
 - No attention to international law (ECN – still not signed...)
 - No attention to European citizenship
 - Value of citizenship : cherry on the integration cake

Belgian citizenship and EU citizenship : a blissfull ignorance

- Acquisition after 5 years of residence
 - **Ezter** (Iranian national) lives in Belgium since 2014 - she works as a sale agent in a shop in Maastricht (30 min. commute from home)
 - 5 years of residence
 - ‘economic integration’ : work outside Belgium does not count...
 - **Donald** (from Cameroun) lives in Belgium since 2012 – attends a specialized 3 years course in Luxemburg to work for investment fund industry
 - 5 years of residence
 - ‘social integration’ : degree outside Belgium does not count... [save in order to demonstrate language skills – provided recognition]

Perception of the acquisition of citizenship by the Belgian society?

- No research directly on perception of the acquisition of citizenship by the Belgian society [but research on public opinion about migration – ESS survey]
- Proxy : analysis of newspapers [2012-2019] – ongoing project
 - Why media? Because of important role of media in framing public debate
 - Top issues : dual nationalities / deprivation / figures
 - Any distinction French / Dutch speaking media?
 - Representations of ‘new’ Belgians?